

THE LITERARY STRUCTURE OF THE  
QUR'ĀNIC VERSE (ĀYA)

BY

'ABD AL-RAHĪM ALĪ MUHAMMAD IBRĀHĪM

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Praise be to God the Lord  
of the worlds.

ABSTRACTTHE LITERARY STRUCTURE OF THE QUR'ĀNIC VERSE (ĀYA)

Approaches to the study of the style of the Qur'ān used to be either strictly grammatical or strictly rhetorical. The present thesis, however, adopts an approach to the aspect of structure, which is partly descriptive and partly analytical. It is an attempt to draw attention to the āya as the basic independent unit of the Qur'ān. To start with, the āya is defined in terms of its relation to the verse in Arabic poetry and the sentence in prose. In the process of definition, problems such as the rhythmic period are treated as well as enjambment and the variation in the length of āyas.

Attention is then focussed on the construction of the āya, that is, how far its components may be independent, in what ways they are connected and how they are usually related to each other. In this respect, the use of connectives in the Qur'ān has been discussed, followed by an examination of alternative methods through which semantic relations within the āya are conveyed - namely parallelism and the pausal phrase.

Then, from a slightly different angle, there is an examination of the stylistic effects which are produced by means of varying structures. Emphasis, for example, is achieved by means of inversions in word-order, and through the special use of pronouns and tenses. Conciseness is another feature of Qur'ānic expression which is found to be achieved by ellipsis, elision and similar structural devices.

The subject is conceived as mainly dealing with the āya - its form, internal relations and how various structural modifications are employed to achieve certain stylistic effects. In short, the thesis is an attempt to analyse and identify those features of structure which strike the modern Arab as slightly peculiar and present the western scholar with many difficulties.

ABBREVIATIONS

- 'Abd al-Jabbār - Al Qādī 'Abd Al-Jabbār, I'jāz al-Qur'ān.
- Ad-Dānī - Ad-Dānī, At-Taysīr fi l-Qirā'at as-Sab'.
- Al-'Aql - Muhāsibī, Al-'Aql wa Fahm al-Qur'ān.
- An-Nashr - Ibn al-Jazrī, An-Nashr fi l-Qirā'at al 'Ashr.
- As-sāhibī - Ibn Fāris, As-sāhibī fī fīḥ al-Lughā wa sanan al-'Arab fī Kalāmihā.
- Balkhī - Al Balkhī, Muqātil ibn Sulaymān, Al-Ashbah wa n-Nazā'ir fi l-Qur'ān al-Karīm.
- Bāqillānī - Bāqillānī, I'jāz al-Qur'ān.
- Bell - Bell, Introduction to the Qur'ān.
- Burhān - Zarkashī, Al Burhān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān.
- Dalā'il - Jurjānī, Dalā'il al-I'jāz.
- Ibn Hishām - Ibn Hishām, Sīrat ibn Hishām.
- Idāh - Qazwīnī, Al-Idāh fī 'Ulūm al-Balāgha.

- Itqān - As-Suyūṭī, Al-Itqān fī 'ulūm al-Qur'ān.
- Jāmi' - Ibn-al-Athīr, Al-Jāmi' al-Kabīr fī sinā'at al-Manzūm min al-Kalām wa l-Manthūr.
- Jāhiz - Jāhiz, Al-Bayān wa t-Tabyīn.
- Kitāb al-'Arūd - Ibn Jinnī, Kitāb al-'Arūd.
- Khafājī - Al-Khafājī, Sirr al-Fasāha.
- Khattābī - Al-Khattābī, Al-Bayān fī I'jāz al-Qur'ān.
- Lata'if al-Ishārāt - Al-Qastallānī, Lata'if al-Ishārat li funūn al-Qirā'at.
- Mubarak - Zakī Mubarak, An-Nathr al-fannī fi-l-Qarn ar-Rābi'.
- The Muqaddima - Ibn-Khaldūn, The Muqaddima.
- Qudāma - Qudāma ibn Ja'far, Naqd an-Nathr.
- Rummanī - Ar-Rummanī, Thalāth Rasā'il fī I'jāz al-Qur'ān.
- Sibawayhī - Sibawayhī, Al-Kitāb.
- Tabarī - Tabarī, Jāmi' al-Bayān.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### THE GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE STYLE OF THE QUR'ĀN

What form of Arabic literature is the Qur'ān? We need an answer for this question in this thesis because the structures of the Qur'ān have to be studied against a definite background, and the stylistic features contrasted with their corresponding qualities in the form that is closer to the Qur'ān. The question is not a new one, however, and all possible answers have been adopted at one time or another. Like other literatures Arabic is generally divided into prose and poetry, so that what is not poetry must be prose. But, unlike any other, Arabic poetry has very strict rules and an exclusive definition. Ibn Jinnī's definition is:

'Arūd is the metre of poetry, and the means by which one distinguishes what is metric from what is not metric. Whatever agrees with the poetry of Arabs as regards the number of letters, vowels and vowelless consonants is poetry - just as theirs is - and what does not agree, in respect of what we have stated, with Arabic poetry - as defined - is not poetry, even though it may be considered metric by some people.'<sup>(1)</sup>

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(1) Kitāb al-'Arūd, p.1.

In spite of any resemblances the Qur'ān may have to Arabic poetry, especially regarding the rhyme and the rhythm, there is no question of its being metric at all.

Why then did the Qur'ān have to refute a claim by the early Arabs that Prophet Muhammad was a poet? In five different sūras the refutation is made explicitly, and a general statement in the sixth sūra against poets implies that the Prophet cannot be one of them.<sup>(2)</sup> The obvious reason for the Qur'ān's refuting this claim is that the claim did actually arise. How then did the claim arise?

Could the Arabs possibly have mistaken the form of the Qur'ān for a type of poetry? This possibility is very remote, since the qualities of poetry were obviously very distinct. A tradition which is recurrently quoted presents al-Walīd ibn al-Mughīra describing the Qur'ān:

'There is none among you who knows Arabic poetry better than I do - its Rajaz, its Qasīd<sup>(3)</sup> and the poems of the Jinnīs - and the Qur'ān is nothing like those.'<sup>(4)</sup>

If the tradition is authentic then the Arabs were aware of the difference between Rajaz and Qasīd, which is a very fine

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(2) See p.6 of this introduction.

(3) The word qasīd is the plural of qasīda and is also a term used for more sustained compositions in poetry as contrasted with casual short poems.

(4) Tabarī, on 74:18-25, vol.29, p.156.



distinction when compared to the contrast between the Qur'ān and poetry as a whole. The authenticity of the tradition, however, is not vital to the argument. Arabic poetry at that time, as represented by the Mu'allaqāt, was very well developed and the composition of poetry was a common skill, so that the rules of 'Arūd, despite the fact that they had not yet been formalized, were very familiar to the Arab ear.

Furthermore, the type of rhymed prose which was very common and which contained many poetic features, especially in the case of the soothsayers' saj', was not regarded as similar to poetry despite its poetic qualities, as would be the case today with our more liberal definitions of poetry. When the winds of blank verse swept over the Arabic world and loosened the grip of metre, the new literary forms were called modern Arabic poetry. Since this form does not insist on metre or rhyme, it had to rely for its individuality on vague features such as special vocabulary, unique structure and richness of imagination and symbolic language. These literary qualities helped to distinguish modern Arabic poetry from modern Arabic prose, but not from other classical forms of prose. The Andalusian Muwashshah was more like Arabic poetry, but it was singled out for, and branded with, a special label because of its liberal habits. The Maqāmāt would fit very well into modern Arabic poetry but they were never thought of as poetic, let alone as poetry.

Bāqillānī was concerned with this question in his I'jāz al-Qur'ān and he suggested two reasons to explain why the Arabs may have called the Qur'ān poetry.



"They may have assigned him (the Prophet) to the class of people who have a delicate sense for the art of expression. Or it may, on the other hand, be understood in the light of the fact that philosophers used to call the intelligent ones among them poets, for their insight into the different modes of expression and their special approaches to logic."<sup>(5)</sup>

He even thought it necessary to explain that even if a few verses of the Qur'ān are metric, they are not sufficient to warrant branding the whole of it as poetry. He referred to a few examples of āyas that were metric and even cited Abū Nuwās, who composed some verses to match with such āyas as 76:14.<sup>(6)</sup> There might have been some puzzle over the question of some āyas being metric and whether this contradicted the statement in the Qur'ān against poets, because Jāhiz also discussed this question. He explained with his usual sarcasm that:

"if a man in the suq called out 'man yashtarī badhinjān' (who'll buy aubergines), his sentence may equally be poetry, as it fits the metre: mustaf'ilun maf'ūlāt. This amount of metrical verses is found in the everyday speech of your house servants."<sup>(7)</sup>

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(5) Bāqillānī, p.76.

(6) Ibid., p.78.

(7) Jāhiz, vol.I, p.235.

Zarkashī also dealt with this problem. He gave two reasons to explain why God cleared His prophet from the allegation of poetry. One is that poets have qualities without which nobody can be called a poet. For an example of those qualities he quotes the Qur'ān: 'Dost thou not see that they wander distraught in every vale?' The other reason, in his opinion, is that there is no difference between poetry and music because, according to the grammarians, time is divided by rhythm in music, and by the variation of the letters in poetry. Then he gave different and more interesting reasons, as to why the Qur'ān was cleared by God from the allegation of being poetry.

"Because, he said, the Qur'ān is truth and sincerity and the poet's greatest achievement is to give error a cloak of truth, to praise to excess and go to extremes in satire. This is why God said 'and it is not the speech of a poet' i.e., a liar. He did not mean that the Qur'ān is not poetry, because they knew the metres too well to be confused about this, or need to be told it was not. It is because poetry has become famous for error that logicians described analogies which usually lead to fallacies as poetic."<sup>(8)</sup>

The last sentence quoted above from Zarkashī is interesting

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(8) Burhān, vol. 2, pp.113-114.

because he alludes to the exact form of the āya 'and it is not the speech of a poet.' All the āyas concerning the relation between the Qur'ān and poetry have the same form, and they do not seem to refer to the form or nature of the Qur'ān directly, but are mainly concerned with clearing the Prophet from being a poet.

- (36:69) 'We have not taught him poetry, nor was it proper for him; it is but a reminder and a plain Qur'ān.'
- (21:5) 'Nay! he is a poet; but let him bring us a sign as those of yore were sent.'
- (37:36) 'What shall we leave our gods for an infatuated poet? Nay! he came with the truth and verified the apostles.'
- (52:30) 'Will they say, 'A poet; we wait for him the sad accident of fate'?'
- (69:41) 'And it is not the speech of a poet.'
- (26:224) 'And the poets do those follow who go astray.'

It appears to me that the Arabs were eager to give a label to Muhammad, classify him, contain the phenomenon that he constituted within the existing social framework. He had to be one of the class of poets or Kāhins, etc. Hence they were only interested in the Qur'ān in so far as it helped them to understand the person who was identified with it. The āyas, then, referred to the Qur'ān as an evidence that Muhammad was not a poet. But even in using the Qur'ān as evidence of Muhammad's prophethood, the reference was to content rather than form. It is but a reminder and a plain Qur'ān. The Arabs, besides

classifying the Prophet, also tried to classify and thereby understand the Qur'ān. In nine āyas they were cited calling the Qur'ān: 'Old folks' tales'.<sup>(9)</sup> Here again it is content and not form that is involved.

All the Arabs' description of the Qur'ān, therefore, and all refutation of it are irrelevant to our theme. But, still these āyas disturbed most Muslims who were concerned with questions about the form of the Qur'ān.

Modern western critics have taken note of the varying nature of style in the Qur'ān. Nöldeke boldly decided that 'the greater part of the Qur'ān is decidedly prosaic', but he observed that certain parts 'show a certain amount of poetic power.'<sup>(10)</sup> He also criticizes the adherence to 'the semi-poetic form', and later: 'Hence the style of the Qur'ān is not poetical but rhetorical; and the powerful effect which some portions produce on us is gained by rhetorical means.'<sup>(11)</sup>

Bell, though he treated the question of rhyme elaborately, did not venture a general statement about the style of the Qur'ān. He was contented with saying:

'The style of the Qur'ān is held to be unique and inimitable. It certainly is characteristic and unmistakable, in spite of its variations from sūra to sūra and from section to section. Its artistic, dramatic, pictorial,

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(9) For example, 6:25, 8:31 and 16:24.

(10) Nöldeke, Sketches from Eastern History, p.32.

(11) Ibid., p.33.

imaginative qualities have often been lost sight of in theological treatment of the I'jāz (the inimitability) of the Qur'ān, but they have always exercised a spell upon the Muslim worshipper. (12)

Huart, like Nöldeke, implies that the style of the Meccan sūras is poetic by saying about the style of the revelation in Medīna, 'The style loses its poetic character.' But he observes adequately enough that,

'the style of the Qur'ān differs very much according to the periods of the Prophet's life at which the revelation was received. Its principal characteristic is that it is altogether written in rhymed prose. This is strongly apparent in the earlier sūras, which have very short verses, and is only marked in the longer chapters inspired at Medina by the terminal pause of each verse, which rhymes assonantly with the other pauses.' (13)

#### Prose

Does it immediately follow that because the Qur'ān is not

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(12) Bell, p.81.

(13) Huart, p.38.



poetry then it must be prose?

It seems that many early Muslim scholars did not see it that way. The position maintained by the greater number of early Muslim scholars is that the Qur'ān is a special form of literature, i.e., neither poetry nor prose. This is the natural conclusion of the standpoint of the majority (jumhūr), who are against calling the Qur'ān saj' (rhymed prose).<sup>(14)</sup> The Arabic word nathr is not exactly rendered by the English 'prose', since nathr carries associations from the original verb nathara, i.e., scattered, e.g., beads.<sup>(15)</sup> To call the Qur'ān nathr therefore is to ignore one of its major characteristics, i.e., rhyme. But the qualified description 'rhymed prose' meets with an even more unhappy Arabic word, saj'. The origin of the word saj' is the sound of pigeons being regular and repetitive.<sup>(16)</sup> Sometimes the word fāsila is used in the sense of a type of composition with pauses but it is also used to designate the letter (consonant) which appears at the pause, or sometimes the whole word, or sometimes even the pausal phrase. One important reason for the word fāsila being used instead of saj' is to avoid this unpleasant connotation. But there are some other more important reasons, as a separate examination of the ideas of some of the anti-saj' group will clarify.

'Abd-al-Jabbār, the Mu'tazilite, in the context of explaining where the inimitability of the Qur'ān lies, said:

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(14) Itqān, p.97.

(15) Lisān al-'Arab.

(16) Ibid.

'Though the challenge can be made sound by a certain level of eloquence and rhetoric, it is more conspicuous and evident for the sublime to be composed in a manner that is not habitual. Since that is so, God has made the Qur'ān in this unusual manner, and endowed it with the distinction of a unique form used neither in their prose nor in their poetry and to a high level of eloquence in order to illustrate its inimitability.' (17)

#### Rummānī

Rummānī explained that the difference between fāsila and saj' is that in fāsila the pause is subsidiary to meaning, whereas in saj' meaning becomes subsidiary. This leads him to the conclusion that a fāsila (pause) is good style but saj' is stylistically a vice. He illustrates his idea with a parable of placing a decorated crown on the head of a Negro, i.e., decorating silly ideas with rhyme. Whereas in the Qur'ān the fāsila best illustrates the meaning, saj' is like a pigeon's voice, nothing but similar sounds. (18)

#### Khattābī

Khattābī followed Rummānī in his views on saj'. He said that Musaylima, who tried to imitate the Qur'ān, only exerted

(17) 'Abd-al-Jabbār, p.224.

(18) Rummānī, pp.97-98.

useless effort to produce senseless words in order to achieve the saj'. It is the habit of a saj' composer, he said, to subordinate meaning to his saj' and care not what he is saying if his saj' is consistent. (19)

Bāqillānī

Bāqillānī reported that the Ash'arites are unanimously against the use of the word saj', and that ash-Shaykh abu-l-Hasan (al-Ash'arī) referred to it in more than one place in his books. But he also referred to those who supported the use of the word and tried to refute their arguments. Their strongest argument, he thought, was the āya where Aaron (Hārūn) comes before Moses to facilitate the rhyme, while it is accepted that Moses has a higher rank and is thus mentioned first where the rhyme allowed. Bāqillānī's arguments are mostly theological in the context of proving the inimitability of the Qur'ān. He argues that the Qur'ān, if saj', would be one of the forms known to the Arabs and thus cannot be inimitable. He also quoted a recurring tradition that the Prophet said reproachingly to somebody who addressed him in saj', 'Do you use Kāhin saj'?'

The interesting argument which Bāqillānī presents, however, is that saj', like poetry, has definite rules and that these rules are not met in the Qur'ān. This meant either that the Qur'ān is poor saj', or that it is not meant to be saj' at all. His conclusion is that the style of the Qur'ān shows no adherence to the rules of saj', especially regarding the length of the

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(19) Khattābī, p.36.



different stanzas; thus where the pauses sound similar it is equally required by the context. Where there seems to be a change of order for the sake of rhyme, as in the case of Moses and Aaron, it is simply a variation in presentation. (20)

Zarkashī also stated his preference for fāsila, referring to the āya 'a book whose signs are detailed' (41:3) because the Arabic word for detailed is 'fussilat' which has the same root as fāsila. At the same time he referred to the root of the word saj' and its unpleasant connotations. Nevertheless, he copied in detail the arguments of those who supported the use of saj'. (21)

Other authors seemed in favour of the Qur'ān's remaining a distinct form of literature, like Abū Hilāl al-'Askarī who consistently quoted examples of rhetorical usage from the Qur'ān, then from prose and then from poetry. He, thus, implied that the Qur'ān is not prose, though he doesn't explicitly say so. (22) 'Askarī is in fact one of a class of writers who approached this problem, not from a theological standpoint as did most of the others whom I have quoted so far, but from the standpoint of the rhetorician. Like other members of this class he was defending saj' as good Arabic style. He faced the problem of the tradition cited above, 'Do you use Kāhin saj'?' He interprets it as an objection directed not towards saj' as an art of expression but towards the special type used by Kāhins, which is unnatural and affected. If saj' was to be denounced

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(20) Bāqillānī, pp.86-89.

(21) Burhān, vol.I, pp.53-55.

(22) See 'Askarī's As-sinā'atayn.

altogether, the Prophet would have said, 'Do you use saj'?' he claimed. He further quoted examples from prophetic traditions where some balance of sentences and rhyme is sought. As an example the tradition: 'Go back with sin and no reward' addressed to some women is 'irji'na ma'zūrāt ghayra ma'jūrāt' where ma'zūrāt is changed slightly from mawzūrāt to suit the other word ma'jūrāt. Still, al-'Askarī did not go so far as to call the Qur'ān saj'.

This same position was in fact maintained by Jāhiz, who seems to be slightly reserved in his praise of saj'. He quotes 'Abd-al-Samad ibn-al-Fadl who explains the tradition in a similar way to the one cited above. Then, Jāhiz relates that saj' was constantly used by Kāhins in the pre-Islamic era and, on account of that, it was prohibited for a while, then allowed later when the reason for prohibition vanished. (23)

Qudāma, the famous critic refers to the style of the Qur'ān as evidence that the continuous use of saj' cannot be a virtue. He thus implies that saj' is not continuously used in the Qur'ān. (24)

Two other scholars remain: Khafājī and Ibn al-Athīr. Khafājī criticized Rummanī's views on the difference between saj' and fāsila strongly: Rummanī's claim that all saj' is bad and all fāsila good is wrong. His theory that in saj' meaning follows rhyme whereas, in fāsila, meaning is primary cannot be right. In fact the distinguishing feature of saj' is that it has identical letters at the pauses whereas fāsilas have similar

(23) Jāhiz, vol.I, pp.234-236.

(24) Qudāma, p.107. (There is now a strong theory that the book is not really Qudamas).

letters. All pauses are either similar letters (saj') or approximate letters. In both cases there is the possibility of the pause being either natural or affected - the natural whether saj' or fāsila is good, acceptable style and the affected, saj' or fāsila is bad, rejected style.<sup>(25)</sup> He noticed that those who rejected the use of the word saj' - and he calls them our friends - with reference to the Qur'ān only did so out of esteem for the Qur'ān - wishing not to apply the attributes of other types of speech to it. He appreciated their position but pointed out that there is no harm in attributing to the Qur'ān the quality of saj', since we attribute to it the qualities of being speech, letters, Arabic and composite (mu'allaf). It may be argued, he realizes, that if saj' is virtuous then why was all of the Qur'ān not saj'? He answered that the Qur'ān was revealed in the style of the Arabs, following their habits and norms of composition; and since they used not to adhere to saj' consistently, because it showed signs of affectedness, artificiality and pretentiousness, the Qur'ān avoided the incessant use of saj'.<sup>(26)</sup>

Ibn al-Athīr approached the problem as a rhetorician and stated very plainly that there is no sūra in the Qur'ān which is completely free from saj', that some sūras are wholly in saj', like 14 and 15, and that there is evidence in this for its supremacy as style.

Again he dealt with the question raised by the tradition, and in answer to it he went a step further than the others. He claimed that the form in which the man expressed himself was

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(25) Khafāji, pp.202-203.

(26) Khafāji, p.205.

perfectly acceptable; the Prophet's objection must therefore be directed towards the man's judgement.

As for the question why, then, all the Qur'ān was not saj', he gave a different answer from that of Khafāji. His answer is that the Qur'ān is usually revealed in a concise and brief style since saj' is not always facile in the concise style, the Qur'ān was not all in saj'. (27)

One of the modern scholars who discussed the character of the style of the Qur'ān is Zakī Mubārak. His thesis is that the Arabs did have literary prose before Islam. He was trying to refute some theories that saj' and other literary forms of prose became known in Arabic only in the fourth century. (28) To avoid the problem of authenticity, he ignored the pre-Islamic orations and adopted the Qur'ān as his evidence of the existence of saj' in pre-Islamic literature. He reproaches Tāha Husayn bitterly on his statement that the Qur'ān is neither prose nor poetry but Qur'ān.

'Should it be said that the Qur'ān is neither poetry nor prose, in order to realize the illusions of those who claim that the Arabs had no literary prose before Islam - because literary prose is the language of thought and the Arabs were a primitive people whose life did not permit of anything more than the sentimental singing of children?' (29)

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(27) Al-Mathal As-sā'ir, pp.271-273.

(28) Mubārak, pp.64-101.

(29) Ibid., p.40.

Summary

It would appear from the preceding essay that the value of the material has slightly been modified by two major factors:

- (a) The views examined were the necessary fruits of differences in points of view - that of the theologian, the rhetorician and the occidental analyst.

The rhetorician is defending a special type of composition and is therefore determined to prove a relationship between it and the Qur'ān. The theologian has a pattern of thought and this point of the form of the Qur'ān is subservient to it, so it has to be fitted into his thesis. The occidental is analytical, but cannot help the interference of western literary concepts.

- (b) As it is ultimately a question of definition, whether the Qur'ān is this form or that, the problems which usually present themselves in such circumstances are all present. We either have to broaden the definition, or ignore some parts or qualities of the Qur'ān. Arabic poetry is too definite to accommodate the Qur'ān; the Qur'ān has too many unprosaic qualities to fit into Arabic prose. To get over the problem by saying that it is prosaic here and poetic there is more or less like saying that the Qur'ān is unique. Also, such a vague description of a style as 'poetic' is rare in Arabic literature.



Jāhiz, who classifies Arabic literature into five different forms, rather than two, makes the problem even more difficult by drawing subtle distinctions between forms that would, otherwise, remain uniform.

However, the selections quoted above from different sources will remain useful for stylistic analysis in, at least, three ways:

1. They put enough emphasis on the phenomenon of rhyme, which is one of the most distinguishing features of the style of the Qur'ān. In this way, a closer look into the nature of rhyme in the Qur'ān is called for. Whereas the available material shows more concern with the significance of the presence of rhyme, I intend to study the nature of rhyme analytically and link it with other stylistic features of the Qur'ān.

2. The question of saj' and fāsilā highlights the āya as a unit of the Qur'ān. Whether it is a unit of meaning or rhythm will remain to be looked into.

There was no emphasis, on the other hand, on the quality of rhythm, which is not less interesting than rhyme. The more one reads the Qur'ān, the more rhythm one finds in it, but the quality of that rhythm remains very peculiarly indefinite. This may be the reason for the chanting quality associated with the Qur'ān since it was first revealed.

But the most obvious and most important idea we are provided with from this material, is the proposition

that the Qur'ān, unique as it is, remains Arabic. The interpreters used to refer to poetry which provided them with all the necessary grammar for the language, but they ignored prose. As the basis for the study of meaning in the Qur'ān was provided, in the past, by the proposition that it was Arabic, so will the same proposition provide the basis for analytical research in the style of the Qur'ān.

### Present Approach

The present approach will endeavour, through the examination of the āya, to utilize, develop and extend the great work achieved by Arab rhetoricians. In addition, it is intended to use more recent developments in literary analysis such as parallelism, structural analysis and emphasis. It may be added that often this "new" analysis may not be quite as new as has been assumed. Sometimes the Arab stylists have already discussed and used such techniques, albeit in terms of their own science and their own terminology. However, the scope of the present thesis has made it necessary to include and examine only those features which are relevant to the problem of structure. Thus, the concept of structure plays an important role in defining the scope of the thesis as well as in the selection of material.

## CHAPTER II

### THE ĀYA DEFINED

Although the word āya is frequently used in the Qur'ān, only on certain occasions has it been used explicitly to refer to that part of the Qur'ān which constitutes the smallest independent unit. The most explicit reference to the āya as a verse is in cases in which the Qur'ān speaks of the abrogation of an āya: 2:106 or of replacing one by another: 16:101. Likewise, where āyas are mentioned in connection with recitation, there is good reason to believe that, there too, they are used in the sense of verses.<sup>(1)</sup>

Two separate senses have been assigned by Tabarī to the term āya as originally used in Arabic. "It may have been called an āya, he explains, because it is a sign that marks off its own beginning and the end of what precedes... or it may mean a tale as in a verse by Zuhayr - in which case the āyas mean tales following one another with and without connections (bi fusūl wa wusūl, literally, conjunctions and disjunctions)."<sup>(2)</sup> Lisān al-'Arab defines the term in three different variations: a sign, a group or an admonition.

The preceding definitions, along with innumerable traditions that speak of the āya as part of the Qur'ān, confirm the reading

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(1) Bell expressed his doubt of the term āya being used to mean verse in the Qur'ān except in one or two instances (Watt's Bell's introduction to the Qur'ān, pp.126-127).

(2) Tabarī, V.I, p.47.



of 'verse' in some of the uses of the word which have been quoted above. Nevertheless, it is interesting that one of the earliest references available does not refer to the sense of a Qur'ānic verse among its definitions of the term.<sup>(3)</sup>

How and when the label came into existence is insignificant here; more important is that from the very beginning the Qur'ānic revelations were divided into those parts which stand out as independent units, having clearly marked endings, and these are commonly referred to as āyas. Muslims throughout history have attached special importance to the independence of the āya. Some traditions speak of the Prophet as dividing his recitation of the Qur'ān into separate āyas: āya by āya.<sup>(4)</sup> There are also a number of rulings which refer to āyas as separate entities. For example, the Muslim prayer must be performed in such a way that each rak'a contains at least one āya; so must the Friday speech. Such rulings may have helped in part to emphasize the independence of the āya, but apart from this paralinguistic element, it is basically due to its construction, that the āya gained considerable autonomy.

The Arabic literary forms that existed before the Qur'ān can be classified into three roughly distinguishable categories. The most famous is poetry, which constitutes the greatest part of the literature which survived from the pre-Islamic period. The second is the soothsayers' saj', from which only scattered

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(3) Balkhī: p.300.

(4) Abu-Dawūd, hurūf I; Tirmidhī, thawāb Qur'ān 23; Ahmad-Ibn-Hanbal, 6-302. (c.f. Wensinck Concordance).

fragments are cited in some of the early references. The third category is the orations. Although the names of a few orators are still echoed in Arabic literature, almost all of pre-Islamic orations have passed into oblivion. There are, however, a few specimens, one of which is reported to have been related by the Prophet himself.<sup>(5)</sup> The authenticity of most of these orations is also questionable, but in spite of that, they may be assumed to have been composed in a style believed to be that of the pre-Islamic orators.

In the case of poetry, the verse (here bayt) is realized as an independent unit of meaning, an integral musical part and a model of the rhythmic scheme. As regards meaning, the independence of an Arabic verse is illuminated by the prohibition of enjambment. In spite of the varying degrees of opposition to enjambment among early Arab critics, the stand against plain enjambment is quite firm. However, it was not the critics view that established the rule; prior to any development of criticism Arab poets avoided compositions where a verse depended syntactically on the subsequent one. A few exceptions occur making what critics later recognized as a fault and called tadmīn (literally "inclusion"). Some of the critics may have carried this rule to such extremes that Western scholarship was led into the belief that Arabic poetry is based on what has been described as a molecular structure.<sup>(6)</sup> Tritton, for instance, writes:

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(5) Jāhiz, VI, p.247.

(6) Scheindlin, p.2.

"Each line of verse had to be complete in itself. Arab poetry is essentially atomic, a string of isolated statements which might be accumulated but could not be combined.... There is little connection between the lines or parts of a poem." (7)

Such views have recently been examined critically by scholars who, having studied certain areas of Arabic poetry, discovered some structural patterns and, therefore, rejected the theory that a verse in a poem was supposed to stand in isolation from other verses. (8) One of these scholars summarized the different ideas in the development of this argument over the place of the verse in a poem. He has successfully modified the modern interpretation of the early critics' disapproval of enjambment and also provided a useful description of the rhythmical pattern of verses which he called "the anticipation-resolution pattern". He has also emphasized two peculiarities of the Arabic verse which, as he noted, help in understanding the structure of the individual verse:

"The first peculiarity is that the metre and

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(7) Encyclopaedia of Islam<sup>1</sup>, 373-75, vol.4, Shi'r.

(8) M. Bateson wrote a linguistic oriented book on "Structural Continuity in Poetry: A linguistic study of five pre-Islamic Arabic odes". Also followed with "The Form and Structure of the poetry of Al-Mu'tamid Ibn-'Abbād." by Scheindlin.

rhyme of the first verse of the poem must be repeated in every succeeding verse. The rule that the metre must not change in the course of the poem has the effect of predetermining within narrowly defined limits the number of syllables of which each verse is composed, so that once the first verse has been heard, the auditor has absolute advance knowledge of the length of every other verse. Thus, built into the metrical laws of Arabic poetry, and into the intuition of every medieval Arab auditor, is a sensation of rhythmic anticipation. The past experience of the auditor has trained him to measure the length and internal rhythm of the first verse, and, upon the conclusion of that verse, to expect a twin verse which, upon reaching the anticipated length, will bring the cycle to a close, thus resolving the feeling of anticipation. The second verse in turn sets into motion a new cycle, which will be repeated again and again until the poem is finished. This rhythm of anticipation and resolution is complemented by the unvarying rhyme. The effect of monorhyme is that the anticipated rhyme syllable punctuates the rhythmic unwinding of the verse to its anticipated length, adding finality to the sensation of resolution which results from the regularity

of the metre."<sup>(9)</sup>

The verse, therefore, is a unit of meaning as well as of music. It is a unit of meaning because it has to give a complete sense and should preferably not depend syntactically on the one that follows it. It is a unit of music because the period is counted and divided in terms of syllables and every single verse must necessarily be as long as the other.

The other form of literature is saj', which is rhymed prose. Two main categories of early Arabic literature are composed in saj': the soothsayers' saj' and the oration. Both types of composition are rhymed, yet they are distinguished from one another by content as well as by form.

The soothsayers' saj' is normally a short composition, consisting of very short vivid phrases. Its constant variation of rhyme creates a feeling of awareness which amounts to tension, since there is always the possibility that something new is going to appear. This feeling is further heightened by the run-on sequence of oaths and provocative predications. Apart from these structural features, the soothsayers' saj' compositions are remarkable for their predominant obscurity which is deliberately stressed by word choice, imagery and other similar stylistic techniques. An example of these compositions is Saṭīḥ's famous prediction of a forthcoming Prophet:

Ra'ayta ḥumama

Kharajat min zuluma

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(9) Scheindlin, p.2.



fawaqa'at bi ard<sup>in</sup> tuhama

fa'akalat minhā kulla dhāt<sup>i</sup> jumju-ma<sup>(10)</sup>

This may be rendered as follows:

Thou sawest a fire bright

come forth from night,

Then on Lowlands alight

Then all devour in its flight.<sup>(11)</sup>

Whereas an element of supernatural was the underlying theme in these soothsayers' saj' compositions, the general themes of orations were mainly social and political. However, the relation between form and content, subtle as it may be, is so profound that the distinction between the style of the orators and that of the soothsayers can hardly be assigned solely to content. There are two formal features that characterize soothsayers' saj'. One is the constant use of rhyme.

The syllable ma, for instance, closes each of the phrases in the previous example. The other feature is the shortness of the period. Measured in terms of syllables, the previous example shows that the first phrase is six syllables long, the second six, the third ten, but the last is thirteen. It seems that the pattern in these compositions is such that a variation in the length of period and in the rhyme is allowed as long as two or more phrases team together.<sup>(12)</sup> The last phrase is also

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(10) Ibn Hishām, vol.I, p.9.

(11) Watt, p.77.

(12) This feature is borne out in other examples such as those quoted by Jāhiz in al-Bayān wa t-tabyīn, and by ibn al-Athīr in Al-mathal as-Sā'ir (vol.I, pp.274-5).

made to stand out by allowing extra length to it.

Although the orations are readily distinguishable to the ear, their various components are not so easily analysable. The reason for this must be ascribed again to the fine relation between form and content. The latter, being exclusively related to one composition or the other, is a remarkable clue to the nature of the whole passage. Apart from such subtle differences as might be discovered on super-accurate analysis, the general form and structure of these orations is approximately the same as that of the soothsayers, a kind of saj'.

An example of these pre-Islamic orations is the one ascribed to Qus, and is as follows:

أيها الناس اجتمعوا  
فاسمعوا وعوا  
من عاش مـات  
ومن مـات فـات

وكل ما هـو آت آت (13)

We again observe the rhyme, the shortness of phrases and the tendency of the last line to be longer. The passage depends more on a parallelism between words and phrases than on a balanced number of syllables. This kind of parallelism became the style of both orations and epistles in the Islamic period and was accepted as the standard for literary Arabic.<sup>(14)</sup> Imprinted

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(13) Previously referred to in note 5.

(14) 'Askarī declares in p.136 that orations and epistles are similar, that one of them may easily be used for the purpose of the other. In p.158 he states that in the

on the literature, this aspect of balance is still a mark of modern Arabic prose. However, the manner in which phrases are balanced has constantly varied from age to age and from one writer to another. Hence, we notice, that this literary quality was given different labels by different critics.

The construction in early Arabic prose that corresponds to the āya is the phrase which carries the rhyme, which is comparable to other phrases within the composition, and which forms a close parallel with at least one neighbouring phrase. A general survey of the Qur'ān will show that no general statement can be ventured about the structure of the āya, such as those statements regarding verses or saj' phrases.

What, then, is the āya? What are the elements that seem to account for some āyas being long while others in the same sūra are short? To what extent is it comparable to poetry and saj'?

#### A. The Rhyme \*

The role played by the rhyme in poetry and early Arabic prose seems to be threefold. The first function is to mark

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composition of orations and epistles, all that is necessary is parallelism (izdiwāj); saj', though not necessary, is preferable. Again in p.260 that prose is never elevated unless it is composed in izdiwāj. See also Beeston's "Parallelism in Arabic Prose" in The Journal of Arabic Literature, vol.5, pp.134-146. I think parallelism is more or less the same as izdiwāj.

\* The term 'rhyme' is used in a wide sense to cover both exact rhyme and assonance.



off the end of one part of the composition. The second is to appeal to the ear. The third is to facilitate the memorization of literary works at a time when writing and writing facilities were not generally available. In poetry it seems that all roles are equally emphasized. The effect of monorhyme as described by Scheindlin "is that the anticipated rhyme syllable punctuates the rhythmic unwinding of the verse to its anticipated length". Another description by Arberry shows how the rhyme in Arabic poetry can also be a source of aesthetic pleasure:

"No-one who has been present at a recital of Arabic odes ... can ever forget the palpitating excitement of waiting line after line for the poet to produce the exactly right word with the right rhyme to round off his rhetorical period. And when the finished poem is studied again in the quiet of meditation, there comes the even greater thrill of discovering if the poet is a master, how he built up each couplet from the very first syllable so that the rhyme word at its end was not merely appropriate but inevitable." (15)

In prose, however, rhyme is used with more emphasis on the first function, that is to mark the end of the phrase. That the rhyme syllable in saj' is variable implies less stress on form

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(15) Arberry, The Seven Odes, p.249.

than on meaning and content. Nevertheless, there is a significant sacrifice of meaning, especially as regards the flow of ideas, in saj', resulting from the insistence on a rhyming word. Arabic prose was sometimes a slave to this rule from whose far-reaching effects only the masters of letters could escape.

The Qur'ān shows little concern for rhyme as such. In a limited number of sūras, we find that there are words which rhyme in the strictest sense. Most of these sūras are very short, and generally believed to be among the early revelations. Among these sūras are: 100, 97, 96, 91 and 86; all of them among the very short sūras of the Qur'ān. Another group of sūras where rhyme is to be found, is that of medium length sūras, sometimes called tiwāl al-mufaṣṣal by Muslim scholars. The sūras of Muhammad, Ar-Rahmān, An-najm and At-talāq are among other sūras in this group which are rhymed. An examination of the chronological order reveals that the first group of short sūras are eminently early, but the other group contains a number of sūras which date considerably later.<sup>(16)</sup> Hence it may be supposed that the phenomenon of proper rhyme in the Qur'ān was associated with two different characteristics.

1. In the first place it is associated with short sūras despite the time and place of revelation.
2. In the second place it is associated with the chronology; that is, rhyme is generally to be found in the earlier sūras. It must be stated,

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(16) C.f. Professor Watt's index of chronological order of Sūras in Bell's Introduction to the Qur'ān, pp.206-13.

however, that signs of liberties in the rhyming of early sūras are remarkable; conversely, properly rhymed sūras or parts of sūras appear among the late revelations. (17)

Apart from such rhyming as is found in the two groups of sūras mentioned above, the greater proportion of the Qur'ān is free from rhyme; as a substitute for it we find assonance. It is notable that all the long sūras show this type of inexact rhyme. A long vowel is followed by a consonant. The ī vowel is sometimes substituted for a ū vowel but not for an ā vowel except in rare cases. The consonants N and M usually interchange; so do the L and R, and the B, D and Q. (18)

An attempt will now be made towards explaining these features and some inferences will be drawn. First, there seems to be no relation between the rhyme of poetry and what rhyme may be found in the Qur'ān. The terminology which is used in Arabic to designate the particular features of poetry is different from that which is used to describe corresponding features in prose or in the Qur'ān. Jāhiz is quoted in Itqān to have stated that Allāh has assigned to his speech labels different from those which were given to the speech of the Arabs. He called the whole of his speech Qur'ān while they called theirs Dīwān; a part of the Qur'ān is a sūra, while a part of poetry is Qasīda. In

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(17) Examples are sūras 47, 25, 65.

(18) A detailed description of the rhyme system and fāsilas is to be found in Professor Watt's, 'Bells Introduction to the Qur'ān', pp.69-71.

similar manner, a part of the sūra is an āya whereas in poetry one part of the qasīda is a bayt.<sup>(19)</sup>

This contrast may be stretched to cover the terminology used to describe rhyme. The fāsila in the Qur'ān is a contrast of the qarina in saj' and the qafiya in poetry.

However, one function of rhyme in poetry and later in saj' was to preserve the composition by rendering it easier to memorize and easier to retain. When the Prophet was at Mecca, still struggling hard to get some listeners among Quraysh, the possibility of committing the Qur'ān to writing was remote. In fact, there is evidence from the Qur'ān that the Prophet used to feel worried when some āyas were revealed to him. Consequently, he moved his lips and tongue in a hasty effort to memorize them before the āyas were even completed. In this connection he was advised:

"Move not thy tongue with it  
to hasten it;  
Ours it is to gather it and to recite it."<sup>(20)</sup>

All the early sūras show features of style which suited the temperament of Meccan society. This new type of speech was intended to attract the Arabs, despite their reluctance to listen to it; it was further intended to move and even shock them. The fundamentals of faith were compressed in terse expressions and the Arab would have been moved by almost every word which he

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(19) Itqān, vol.I, p.51.

(20) Tabarī's interpretation of 75:16-19.

might occasionally overhear. The rhyme was virtually part of a general style which suited that period. It made it easier to memorize groups of āyas which were linked together, rendered it more attractive, and acted as an invitation to discover what followed.

Most of these short sūras begin either with peculiar oaths or conditionals which give them a magnetic suspense that relaxes only at the very end. It is also worth noting that while a sufficient number of rhyming words may be available for a short passage, this would not be the case in a long one, unless meaning is allowed to take second place in relation to form.

Reference has already been made to the functions of rhyme, two of which seem to be met by the actual use of it in short and early sūras, such as the role of rhyme as an appeal to the ear and as an aid to memory. The third function of marking the end of a sentence is performed in two different manners.

In the short sūras where rhyme occurs, it acts as the mark of a pause, without great emphasis on the pause. The āya in these sūras is not completely independent as the sequence in most cases is a run-on sequence. The pause is a breath-taking device which leaves the auditor wondering what will follow. Short and sometimes dependent on what follows, the āya is allowed to end with a consonant preceded by a short vowel. This is normally not the case with longer āyas.

In the long sūras, the situation changes. There is no haste here, the audience is an attentive audience. The revelation may now be dictated to the scribes and placed in the context of the previous āyas. The themes are not fiery and



therefore no picturesque style is necessary. Rhyme is no longer necessary in order to appeal to the ear, or as an aid to memory. Other means are employed which suit the new structure of the āya. We now normally have a long independent construction which can stand alone, be recited by itself and is usually complete. The pause must therefore be a long one to allow for a long breath-taking and mark the end of a long structure.

It has been noticed that the syllable structure of the Arabic language is such that, 'before a break in utterance, or pause the structures CVC and CVCC are also admitted. Any situation which would result in CVC occurring otherwise than before a pause is normally avoided by realizing the syllable as CVC.<sup>(21)</sup> The terminal pause in the Qur'ān, particularly in long sūras, is normally CVC. A typical example of such a structure are the seven āyas which form sūra I, al-Fātiha. The end words of the seven āyas are as follows: al-'ālamīn, ar-rahīm, ad-dīn, nasta'īn, al-mustaqīm, ad-dāllīn. Normally, each of these words would have a vowel at the end, but the rules of Arabic grammar are such that vowels should not be pronounced at the pause.<sup>(22)</sup> In other words, the syllable structure will change into c̄vcv joining the last consonant in one āya with the one at the beginning of the other, with only a short vowel between them. The rules of tajwīd, however, make a pause at the end of each āya preferable

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(21) A.F. Beeston's "The Arabic Language Today", p.20. The signs CVC are used to indicate a consonant followed by a vowel and then another consonant. The sign  $\bar{V}$  indicates a long vowel.

(22) Sibawayhī, p.337, vol.2.



except in certain circumstances. The Prophet, relates one tradition, used to separate the āyas when reciting āya by āya. (23)

The punctuating role of pause phrases is further confirmed by the scarcity or even absence of unvoiced consonants at the pauses. The f, t, th, dh and z are very rare, if at all, at the pauses. This phenomenon is partly due to the hissing nature of these consonants whereas almost all the pausal consonants are voiced.

Besides this tendency to get a long vowel followed by a consonant, there seems to be a preference for assonance. Among Muslim scholars, it has been assumed that the general rule in the Qur'ān is to produce assonance. Consequently, the counting of āyas depended mainly on this aspect. Within some āyas there occur phrases which appear to be end phrases, but since they do not assonate with other āyas, the former are not counted as separate. Among such would-be āyas, Suyūṭī counts 4:133, 4:172, 17:59, 19:97. The end words are: bi'ākharīn, al-muqarrabūn, al-awwalūn, al-muttaqīn. These words would fit in very properly in other sūras where the last syllable is īn, but they happened to be in sūras where the syllable is otherwise.

There is no effort, however, to produce rhyme where it is not easily accessible. Consonants are freely interchanged, the same word may be repeated at the end of many āyas, all three vowels substitute each other especially the ī and ū and, on the whole, the liberties exercised in the Qur'ān go beyond those in poetry and saj'.

On the other hand, there are numerous examples where the

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(23) An-nashr, vol. I, p.226.

construction seems to be shaped in such a way as would make the last word rhyme with other āyas. In Itqān, Suyūṭī quotes Shams ad-Dīn Ibn-as-Ṣā'igh as saying: "Know that harmony is a thing sought in language, for whose sake deviations are committed." He then declares that he examined the end-words of āyas and found out that over forty types of grammatical deviations were made. But he continues to say that these deviations may not be exclusively for the purpose of harmony; they may also be due to some other (stylistic) reasons. (24)

It has already been noted that Muslim scholars when marking āyas were mainly concerned with assonance. Another statement which complements the previous one of Itqān is to be found in Lata'if al-Ishārāt by Qastallānī. He points out that 'the question of fāsila (assonance or rhyme) depended on either: harmony (munāsaba), independence (istiqlāl) or periodicity (muwāzana). The examples show that by harmony, he means the occurrence of assonance; by independence he means syntactical independence, and by periodicity he means the symmetry between the different āyas in a sūra. As a consequence of this triple measure, overlapping occurs between the end of an āya and a fāsila. Ad-dānī is quoted to have drawn a distinction between the āya's end and the fāsila:

"the fāsila is the speech disjointed (by assonance or rhyme) from what follows.

This may or may not be the end of the āya.

Every āya's end is a fāsila but not

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(24) Itqān, vol. 2, pp.99-100.

vice versa." (25)

Some of the other definitions he offers for the fāsila are:

1. 'the word at the end of the āya like the qāfiya of poetry and the garīna of saj'. (26)
2. 'the word at the end of the sentence'. (27) (Here, apparently, the āya is confused with the sentence.)
3. 'Similar letters at the ends (maqāti'), through which the meaning is understood. (28)

A good example of an āya which poses similar problems is 2:219.

"They will question thee concerning  
wine, and arrow-shuffling. Say: 'In both  
is heinous sin, and uses for men,  
but the sin in them is more heinous  
than the usefulness'.  
They will question thee concerning  
what they should expend. Say: 'The abundance'.  
So God makes clear His signs to you haply  
you will reflect;

(25) Lata'if al-Ishārāt, v.I, p.265.

(26) Ibid.

(27) Ibid.

(28) Ibid.

in this world and the world to come.

The phrase: haply you may reflect, La'allakum tatafakkarūn is the end of this āya according to the Egyptian printed Qur'ān which is based on 'Āsim's reading. It is clear that the pause here is suitable in terms of assonance and period, but the following phrase: "in this world and the world to come" must necessarily be joined to it, lest it should be associated with the orphans in the following āya. According to some other readers, the āya ends at: 'should expend', mādhā yunfiqūn? Yunfiqūn is a suitable word for a fāsila but the meaning is yet to be finished.

#### B. Enjambment

This brings us to the second problem in the definition of the āya, that of enjambment. It has already been seen that in Arabic poetry, a verse is not supposed to depend syntactically on the succeeding one. The practice shows that a verse may, nevertheless, depend on that which precedes it. In this respect, as well as in the use of rhyme, the Qur'ān shows liberties and variations of usage not exercised in poetry. The significance of the following survey of syntactical relations between āyas is that it helps to illuminate the question of independence. It helps us to find out how far the ends of āyas are congruent with the completion of meaning. It is worth noting here, that the grammatical definition of a sentence is always flexible enough... to accommodate variations and allow for different effects. Style among other things, depends on the flexibility of sentence

construction, but no matter how flexible the definition of a sentence may be, some āyas do not comply with it.

Here again, no generalization can be made, but certain common features may be observed among the short sūras, while other features are shared by the long sūras. In general, the āyas of short sūras tend to be dependent on each other and show a greater degree of interrelationship.

There are four types of āyas which present a clear case of the āya being something other than simply a complete sentence.

1. The letters of commencement.
2. The oaths.
3. The conditional phrases.
4. Semi-interjectional one word ayas.

Normally, the isolated letters of commencement are counted as āyas, although their specific meaning is never agreed upon. They cannot even be assumed to be words, since they are read as separate letters.

As for oaths, they seem to fall into different groups. The ones that matter here are the oaths which by themselves constitute separate āyas. 'By heaven and the night-star', 'By heaven of the constellations, by the promised day', 'By the dawn and ten nights';<sup>(29)</sup> such oaths are counted as āyas, although they do not constitute a complete meaning. Not only do these oaths leave one in suspense, but in many cases the long expected complement of the oath does not come. One gets the feeling that

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(29) 86:1, 85:1-2, 89:1-2.



these oaths may sometimes not have been meant to confirm news external to them, but to produce a composite effect of impressive images and to cast a shade of awe upon the things which are sworn by.

Like the oaths, the conditional sentences which begin with idhā 'when', and yawma 'the day when', are incomplete sentences. In sūra 82, for example, the first five āyas are:

"When heaven is split open,  
When the stars are scattered,  
When the seas swarm over,  
When the tombs are overthrown,  
then a soul shall know its works, the former and  
the latter."

Each one of the first four is counted as an āya because each carries a rhyme; although all four only constitute the conditional phrases, the apodosis of which is the fifth phrase. Such a case in Arabic poetry will form a typical case of tadmīn which is impermissible.

The last group of āyas which present a clear case of dependent āyas, is where one word (usually at the beginning of some short sūras,) stands out as a separate āya. Sūras 55, 69, 101 begin respectively with the following words: The Beneficent! The Reality! The Calamity! In the case of this last group, the first āya is clearly a word of exceptional significance, which is intended to provoke interest and expectation.

Āyas 55:64 and 106:1 are not strictly classifiable with any of the previous groups, but they roughly resemble groups 4 and 3

respectively. Some more examples of this type of enjambment are: 76:6-10; 89:27-28; 101:6-7-8-9.

The four groups described above together form the extreme state of dependence. Not only are the āyas, in these groups, short and grammatically incomplete, but they also depend on what follows them. Incomplete āyas which do not depend on what follows them are innumerable in the Qur'ān. They may also be divided into two classes.

One class of incomplete āyas which depend on what precedes, but not on what follows, are especially characteristic of short sūras. Among them the following categories may be marked.

Where a noun phrase āya is credible only as an agent of a verb which preceded in the previous āya, as in 50:13.

Where the āya is an adverbial phrase qualifying the previous āya as in 53:14; 85:22.

Where the āya is in apposition 'badal' to a noun, an agent, a post-fixed noun or a noun clause, as in 85:17-18; 98:2; 81:19-22; 53:38, respectively.

In the other class, the grammatical relation between āyas is less obvious. Nevertheless, āyas are joined together by means of pronouns and conjunctions or by being conceptually related to each other, so much that one āya is hardly intelligible when isolated from the others. An example of such āyas is to be found in sūra 78, where the first āyas are:

"Of what do they question one another?

of the mighty tidings

whereon they are at variance.

No indeed; they shall soon know!

Again, no indeed; they shall soon know!"(30)

Each one of these lines is a separate āya, but obviously the āyas are intended to link up and form a passage. Other examples of this type are: 79:15-24; 80:11-16, 24-32; 83:8-9. A remarkable feature of this class is the use of pronouns and conjunctions which together link one āya to the other. We get a number of āyas each connected to the other by a conjunction and each containing a pronoun that refers to the theme of the passage.

The long āyas, which are usually to be found in long sūras, are generally less problematic. The long āya is often a complete sentence which is sometimes simple but in many cases complex. Such āyas frequently have a greater degree of independence; each one stands for a separate complete sense. Āyas which depend grammatically on their successors are very rare in long sūras. One of those is the following:

"In temples God has allowed to be raised up,  
and his name to be commemorated therein;  
therein glorifying Him, in the mornings and  
the evenings,  
are men whom neither commerce nor  
trafficking diverts from the remembrance  
of God ..."(31)

The first āya ends at 'evenings', leaving the agent of the verb

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(30) 78:1-4.

(31) 24:36-7.

to appear in the next āya.<sup>(32)</sup> According to some readings the verb yusabbihu is in the passive form yusabbahu;<sup>(33)</sup> the āyas thus read are quite free from enjambment.

On the other hand, examples of āyas that depend on those which precede them are quite numerous even in long sūras. The great majority of these are clauses of alladhīna. These are usually clauses that explain or elaborate on a theme mentioned in the previous āya as in: 2:

و استمعين بالصبر والصلاة و انها لكبيرة الا على الخاشعين

الذين يظنون أنهم ملاقوا ربهم و انهم اليه راجعون

The second of the two āyas obviously depends on the preceding, while the first may be perfectly independent. This same feature is to be found in almost all āyas that commence with alladhī or alladhina. It has been noted that all structures beginning with these words, except in seven places, may either be joined to what precedes or not. When it is not joined, the phrase is conceived as a predicate.<sup>(34)</sup> It seems that these clauses are meant to stand out separately as a means of highlighting their themes. In support of this view we notice that these clauses are usually clauses descriptive of classes of people who are often referred to in the Qur'ān, either as highly good or as highly

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(32) Pickthall's translation conveys this aspect more clearly,

"Therein do offer praise to Him at morn and evening.

Men whom neither merchandise nor sale beguileth from remembrance of Allah..."

(33) Ad-Dānī, p.162.

(34) Lata'if al-Ishārāt, vol.I, p.261.

evil. Examples of this are to be found in 3:168, 172-173.

However, there are other examples of post-dependence where it is not clear that the previous interpretation is applicable. An example of such āyas is 2:3-4:

"He has sent down upon thee the book  
with the truth, confirming what was before it  
and He sent down the Torah and the Gospel  
aforetime, as guidance to the people ..."

The fāsila occurs at the word Gospel (Injīl). Other examples are 16:21, 15:17-18, 14:20, 14:28-29, 19:13-14, and the four first āyas of sūra 20. The relation in most cases is one which may be disposed of by assuming a curtailed grammatical role. Apart from such āyas as in the previous examples, āyas in long sūras tend to be quite independent; nevertheless, the recurrence of interdependent āyas makes it inadequate to assume that an āya is simply a sentence.

#### C. Rhythmic Period

We may now consider the possibility of defining the āya in terms of a rhythmic period.

It is generally accepted that the highest quality of saj' is where the rhymed phrases are short and the parts are equal, followed by compositions in which the second part is longer than the first.<sup>(35)</sup> In the Qur'ān there is usually less care for the

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(35) Maqdisī, p.208.



rhythmic period than there is for meaning. Even in the short sūras where rhythm is emphasized, the presence of long āyas among short ones is a common feature.

The opposite is also true. 73:20 is a 77 word āya in a sūra where the average āya is between 6 and 10. This is, however, an extreme example unequalled in the Qur'ān except by the long āya on the subject of debt in the second sūra. The long sūras abound in āyas which are extremely long, occasionally interrupted by a short one or more. There is, therefore, no simple case of an āya defined in terms of the rhythmic period, but there are features of regularity and a certain degree of predictability governing certain irregularities. Among these observable features are the tendency of āyas to become longer towards the end in a number of short sūras. Sūra I has seven āyas, the last of which is twice or three times as long as any of the others. This is also true of 103 and to some extent of 98. Although this feature is not very common, its significance is emphasized by the absence of its opposite. In other words, the āyas at the beginning of sūras are usually short. Many sūras commence with a few separate letters; many others with quite short āyas. Once the tone is set it becomes acceptable to take liberties and vary the length of āyas from time to time.

It is also important to note that the length of some āyas may be deceptive, since the rules of tajwīd make it necessary to slow down the recitation either by prolonging a vowel or by dwelling on certain clusters or emphasizing some nasalizations. The one-word āya mudhāmmatān is therefore much longer than it might seem to be, since it contains two very long vowels and a cluster of two ms. The rhythmic period must, therefore, be

measured in terms of the rules of recitation, rather than by simply counting letters. When all these aspects are considered, the result is still not that of equal rhythmic periods throughout, but of approximately equal ones. Variation is a constant phenomenon of style in the Qur'ān, the length of the rhythmic period is therefore varied, not only from one sūra to another but also occasionally within the same sūra.

In the final analysis the length of āyas seems to depend mainly on the arrangement of meaning. It is not easy, however, to decide where an idea should be finished in one sentence and where it should be divided into more than one. Nevertheless, the adequacy of length in a great many āyas is discernible. If we examine for example, 2:164, we will observe the following:

1. It is longer than all the āyas around it.
2. It is an account of the signs of God given in the form of a summary.
3. It is not in a context of enumerating signs.

The signs are summarized within this āya as a device for stressing the point mentioned in the preceding āya, the oneness and mercifulness of God. The text then moves on to refer to those who set up equals to God, whose sin is made to appear all the more terrible by allowing those compelling signs to be followed by unforgiveable ingratitude. Hence it was found appropriate to sum up the signs in one long āya lest the effect of immediacy should be lost in the kind of prolonged detail which fits sign āyas in other contexts. Similarly, in 2:177 the

āya is much longer than the neighbouring āyas and the reasonable explanation is that in order to produce the right effect, the different qualities of a righteous person had to be juxtaposed in one and the same āya. It would have been quite conceivable, had it not been for this element of effect, to break the āya into two or three separate āyas without actually having to change the words very much. The word An-nabiyyīn and As-sā'ilīn and Al-masākīn all provide suitable fāsilas. Another example is 19:58 which is relatively long. Obviously the reference to the lofty lineage of the prophets is not meant to be a matter of detail, but it is presumably necessary to refer to those four father-prophets Adam, Noah, Abraham and Israel, and those whom God chose and guided. The reference to those whom God chose and guided gives the feeling that this is a summing up. The rhythmic period has consequently been allowed to expand though not disproportionately.

In the stories of the Qur'ān, we notice that the different parts of the story are divided into approximately equal āyas. Occasionally, one āya may be found which is relatively longer than the others. In such cases we usually detect a tendency to group together details which need not be focussed on. Examples of this are in 20:40, 12:31. Similarly, an argument is usually allowed to be finished as in 11:17, 14:22, 14:88.

Some sūras seem to have within them two or more levels of rhythmic periods and the āyas in these sūras could be divided into two or more groups, according to length. Sūra 13 is an example of those. The variation of period within the sūra does not seem to effect the harmony of rhythm, probably because the ear is trained to expect the fāsila at variable rhythmic periods.

The result of this investigation into the nature of the āya brings us not to any specific definition, but to some rather general conclusions:

1. That the structure of the āya does not comply with the rules of either saj' or poetry.
2. That greater liberties are taken in all aspects of rhyme, independence and period.

### CHAPTER III

#### SYNTACTIC RELATIONS

##### Section A

##### CONSTRUCTION

With regard to degrees of complexity, āyas vary from the simple phrase to the complex, multi-sentence structure. Sūra 44, for instance, abounds in simple āyas like:

وما خلقنا السموات والارض وما بينهما لاعبين ما خلقناهما الا بالحق  
ولكن اكثرهم لا يعلمون ان يوم الفصل ميقاتهم اجمعين يوم لا  
يفني مولى عن مولى شيئا ولا هم ينصرون .. (38-41)

Āyas may be quite long, but not very complex as in 60:12

يا أيها النبي اذا جاءك المؤمنات يبائعينك على ان لا يشركن بالله شيئا  
ولا يسرقن ولا يزنين ، ولا يقتلن اولادهن ، ولا يأتين ببهتان  
يفترينه بين أيديهن وأرجلهن ، ولا يعصينك في معروف ،  
فبائعهن واستغفر لهن الله ، ان الله غفور رحيم

Apart from the vocative at the beginning of the āya it consists of a conditional and its apodosis and finally a clause of reason. Long āyas can be much longer and much more complex.

It is with such long and complex āyas that this chapter will be concerned. No grammatical analysis will be attempted but, rather, the stylistic features will be discussed. This, however, may occasionally appear to come very close to grammatical analysis.

##### Integral Parts

The first feature is that most complex āyas consist of member clauses which are independent. These parts, though



capable of standing alone, are usually linked up by various devices to form a whole, which exhibits a considerable degree of cohesion. As various factors are weighed up against each other in the process of linking up a number of units, the result is a delicate balance which involves acoustic relations as well as semantic ones. We will have to examine the nature of links weighed against semi-poetic, abrupt shifts; integrity of parts against cohesion; semantic relations against rhythm and imagery. In short, the āya of the Qur'ān should not be treated like a prose sentence, governed by the rules of prose nor appreciated in the light of purely logical measures.

#### Punctuation\*

The Qur'ān is, of course, not punctuated. It has been seen earlier that āyas are distinctly marked off by means of assonance, but the constituent parts of an āya do not have such a distinguishing mark. Attempts have been made to punctuate the text of the Qur'ān by recent Muslim scholars who obviously depended on meaning to decide where pauses, major or minor,  
(1)  
should be made. Neither the signs, which are mostly letters of the alphabet, nor the places where they should be inserted are

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\* Here the term 'punctuation' is used to cover any form of indicating pause outside the words themselves.

(1) Most texts of the Qur'ān refer to a work by a late head of the maqāri' (recitation office) who is said to have depended in his work on acceptable interpretations.

agreed on. These signs are not without merit, since they are intended to help readers who are not acquainted with Qur'ānic structures. However, early Muslim scholars must have refrained from introducing such devices, as it would seem unlikely that they were unaware of the need for punctuation as a guide to understanding the text. In fact, the awareness of this need was quite obvious in the discipline which was called waqf and ibtidā' (pause and commencement) or, alternatively, wasl and fasl (junctures and disjunctions).<sup>(2)</sup> Rules which govern the punctuation of the Qur'ān were elaborately discussed and applications excessively quoted, but the insertion of these into the text was refrained from. Probably, this was so because no agreement could be reached on exactly what pauses there were or where the pauses should be made and secondly because the introduction of anything new into the text was traditionally disapproved of. A third reason for the early Muslim scholars' position might be the feeling that the nature of the text was syntactically very rich in possibilities; and the limitation of these to one fixed reading would seem to be impoverishing it.

However, the major principles of waqf and ibtidā' imply that the need for some sort of punctuation was felt. Suyūṭī reports a few statements about the need for this discipline; some of which refer to it as vital for the understanding and the inference of Legal laws from the Qur'ān. Others mentioned that every reader needs to make some pauses to take his breath;

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(2) See for instance Itqān, vol.I, p.85, where Suyūṭī uses the terms alternately.

hence the pauses should be made where an intelligible start is possible and the meaning is not rendered absurd. What illustrates the attitude of these scholars further, is the similarity of manner in which they classified the type of pauses. The types normally listed range from three to eight but do not show any change of scope. One of the earliest references is Ibn-al-Anbārī who defines three categories: the tāmm (complete), the hasan (fair), the qabīḥ (ugly).

The complete is where a pause may reasonably be made and an independent start after it is possible, as in 2:5

أُولَئِكَ عَلَىٰ هُدًى مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ ۖ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

The fair is where a pause may be made but no independent start afterwards is available as in 1:1 الحمد لله رب العالمين where الحمد لله is complete but رب العالمين is an adjectival phrase modifying the noun which precedes it.

The ugly is where neither the sense is complete nor the start after the pause comprehensible as in بِسْمِ اللَّهِ if a pause is made between the two words. (3) Other scholars used different terms like lāzim (necessary) for pauses which if not made the meaning would be distorted, as in 4:171 سبحانه أن يكون له ولد . له طافي السموات وطافي الأرض If a pause is not made after walad it might be assumed that the following phrase lahū is modifying walad whereas it should modify the noun Allāh. (4)

As in other disciplines, it also seems to be the case in this field that more and more concern began to build up as time went on regarding the details of rules for pauses. Yet, even

(3) Itqān, Vol.I, p.84.

(4) Ibid., vol.I, p.84.



as early as Ibn-Kathīr, the reader of Mecca (died 120/738) it was found necessary to make certain specific pauses. He is reported to have paused deliberately at these points in the whole Qur'ān and, as for other places where there might be a pause, he cared not whether he paused or not.<sup>(5)</sup>

One of the āyas within which Ibn-Kathīr made a deliberate pause is 3:7 وما يعلم تأويله إلا الله | والراسخون في العلم يقولون ... A pause after the word Allāh resolves the ambiguity caused by the conjunction. According to some interpretations even this pause is not necessary.<sup>(6)</sup>

What, then, is to be inferred from the previous review of Qur'ānic punctuation?

It seems that any set of rules will have to be implemented on the basis of one specific reading of the Qur'ān. Therefore, the variety of readings is bound to be limited and yet, from a literary point of view, no definite purpose is served. This supports the view that the attitude of the earlier scholars was better in so far as it preserves the richness of syntax. What an English stylist wrote about old English may be as truly applied to the Qur'ān:

"Since any modern punctuation will sometimes  
limit the interpretation of an old English

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(5) Qastallānī, Lata'if-al-Ishārāt, vol.I, p.262

(6) Vol.I, p.338, al-Kashshāf. On the āya 3:7, Zamakhsharī adopts the view that al-rāsikhūn are attached to God in so far as they, too, know the interpretation of the Qur'ān.



text to one of several possible syntactic configurations, we should perhaps accept the text unpunctuated to appreciate its less precise but richer syntax than our own ..."(7)

A classical example of how rich an āya without punctuation may be is 2:2 ذلك الكتاب لا ريب فيه هدى للمتقين . As Zamakhsharī points out, there are various possible readings but the most effective is to assume a pause after al-Kitāb and count this as a separate sentence, another pause after fīhi and count that a second sentence and a third pause at the end, making three sentences within one short āya. In this particular case, the differences between one reading and the other are slight, but there are other examples which seem to have worried some grammarians and invited the idea of the necessary pause (waqf lāzim). Such is 36:76 فلا يحزنك قولهم انا نعلم ما يسرون و ما يعلنون where there is reference to 'saying', because the absence of punctuation causes uncertainty as to whether what follows is a quotation of what they said or whether, as in the previous example, it is God's word resumed. In most cases, however, the context does make it quite obvious that there is only one real possibility. The punctuation is almost superfluous.

It has been stated earlier that the complex āya, usually, consists of more than one clause. It has also been seen that punctuation cannot hope to solve the intricacy of clause interdependence. Some of the problems which need to be looked

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(7) Turner, Stylistics, p.101.



into, concerning the complex āya, is how the theme relates to different clauses or sentences within the āya and also how these clauses are co-ordinated.

#### Theme and Perspective

الله نور السموات والارض مثل نور ه 24:35  
كشكاة فيها صباح . الصباح في زجاجة الزجاجاة كأنها  
كوكب درى يوقد من شجرة مباركة ، زيتونة لاشرقية ولاغربية  
يكاد زيتها يضىء ولولم نمسه نار . نور على نور يهدى الله  
لنوره من يشاء ، ويضرب الله الامثال للناس والله بكل شي عليم

'Allāh' is probably the main theme in this āya, but obviously the development of the imagery carries the focus gradually away so that in the next clause the theme is His light, not Him. In the third clause the theme becomes the lamp. In the fourth the theme shifts to the bottle, and touches on the tree and in the fifth the oil of the tree becomes the theme. Then the focus turns back to Allāh himself; by repeating the Name, the threads are forcefully pulled back to the real theme of the sentence. This feeling of the shifting is further strengthened in this āya by the fact that all the different clauses retain the same structures every time the theme is introduced as the subject and takes the predicate except in the fifth clause which starts with a verb. (8)

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- (8) This feature of shifting theme has sometimes been called takhallus by Arab rhetoricians. Strictly speaking the term applies to the device used by poets to escape from

This is an example of shifting theme, but there are equally loved āyas in which the theme remains the same. For example

الله لا اله الا هو الحي القيوم لا تأخذه سنة ولا نوم له ما في السموات وما في الارض من ذا الذي يشفع عنده الا باذنه يعلم ما بين ايديهم وما خلفهم ولا يحيطون بشيء من علمه الا بما شاء وسع كرسيه السموات والارض ولا يؤوده حفظها وهو العلي العظيم .

This, together with the previous example, has come to be enormously exalted and is ceaselessly repeated by Qur'ānic reciters. One of the reasons for this is the sublimity of style. Both āyas have Allāh as their theme but 2:255 is different in so far as the theme runs right through the āya making the other themes subordinate to it. In 2:255 the device used to keep the focus on the theme in each clause is simply one of constant reference, through pronouns, back to the subject. Nevertheless, each clause adds effectively and elaborates on the main proposition **الله لا اله الا هو**. This main clause is followed by two adjectives: **الحي القيوم** which complete the first clause but may very well stand on their own as the predicate to a suppressed pronoun. Next is a complementary clause, **لا تأخذه سنة ولا نوم** subordinated to the first one by virtue of having to refer to it in ta'khudhuhu. The symmetry of the āya will be quite different if only, instead of the pronoun, we have the noun itself. Again there is all the difference between **له ما في السموات وما في الارض** which is the fourth clause and

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one subject in their poem to the next, particularly from the traditional opening to the main theme.

the possible alternative to it **لله ما في السموات وما في الارض**  
The latter is a very independent clause, too independent to be subordinated. There are, of course, the strictly co-ordinate sentence and even what might be called the hypotactic structure where a conditional and its apodosis, for example, constitute the skeleton of the *āya*, but the more common feature is the type of structure which is built up from a series of two, three or more member clauses. Examine 3:114

يؤمنون بالله و اليوم الآخر  
و يأمرون بالمعروف  
و ينهون عن المنكر  
و يسارعون في الخيرات و أولئك من الصالحين

They believe in God and in the last day  
and they bid to honour,  
and forbid dishonour,  
vying one with the other in good works;  
those are of the righteous.

The series structure has a stylistic effect of being forceful and persuasive. Most clearly this can be seen in 22:6-8

ذلك بأن الله هو الحق  
وأنه يحيي الموتى  
وأنه على كل شيء قدير  
وأن الساعة آتية لا ريب فيها و أن الله يبعث من القبور  
ومن الناس من يجادل في الله بغير علم ولا هدى ولا كتاب منير  
Another important feature is the phrasing of the structure in such a way that it becomes semi-periodic and thus suspense is achieved. In 13:17 the main clause is the last but one. The *āya* starts with an elaborate description of the image which

will later be referred to in the main clause. Delay is not only useful here for creating a feeling of suspense but it also paves the way for a clear understanding of the simile when it is made. The āya reads:

أنزل من السط ماء فسالت أودية بقدرها  
فاحتمل السيل زبدا رابيا  
ومط يوقدون عليه في النار ابتغاء حلية أو متاع زبد مثله  
كذلك يضرب الله الحق والباطل  
فأما الزبد فينهبط جفاً وأما ما ينفع الناس فيمكث في الأرض  
كذلك يضرب الله الأمثال

He sends down out of heaven water,  
and the wadis flow each in its measure,  
and the torrent carries a swelling scum;  
and out of that over which they kindle fire,  
being desirous of ornament or ware,  
out of that rises a scum the like of it.  
So God strikes both the true and the false.  
As for the scum, it vanishes as jetsam,  
and what profits men abides in the earth.  
Even so God strikes his similitudes.

The clause, كذلك يضرب الله الحق والباطل emerges as a surprise, making it clear that the story of rain, torrent and scum is not meant for itself but as an illustration of the ultimate end of truth and falsehood. Thus, it becomes evident that the preceding elaborate description has been employed to enrich the metaphorical contrast between useful things, like metal and irrigating water on the one hand and useless things, like scum, on the other.

'As for scum, it vanishes as jetsam, and what profits men abides in the earth'. It is worth noting here that this statement by virtue of position relates scum to falsehood and by identifying the one with the other the phrase serves more than one purpose. Reference to 'what profits men' is skilful because it sums up the group of metal, water and truth, all being useful as opposed to scum. It also makes it clear that the focus is now on truth and not on the images which were created for it. Positioned so appropriately before the climax of the image, the clause receives the force of that climax.

### Sequence

Sometimes the sequence in an āya may seem to be lacking, but this is usually due to either the historical context - and when this is understood the different parts seem to fit together - or the style in which connectives are left out. Before we proceed to examine the problem of connectives, it is useful to quote an example of sequence provided by historical context. In 2:189

يسألونك عن الأهلة ، قل هي موافيت للناس والحج ،  
وليس البر بأن تأتوا البيوت من ظهورها ولكن البر من اتقى

"They will question thee concerning the  
new moons. Say: 'They are appointed  
times for people, and the pilgrimage.'

It is not piety to come to the houses  
from the backs of them; but piety is to  
be Godfearing; ..."



The commentators have tried to establish the relevance between the question about new moons and the subsequent statement on piety not being connected with approaching houses from the rear. Some of the Ansār, reports Tabarī, had a taboo against entering a house through the door during pilgrimage time. They used to climb over the wall or make a hole in the back wall through which they entered and exited. However, this does not quite solve the problem. Hence there is more than one theory to explain why that habit was mentioned in this particular connection. One explanation is that it was mentioned by way of istitrad (digression) which is a rhetorical device well known in Arabic literature. According to this theory the pilgrimage has been mentioned in the āya and that in turn has led to one of the problems connected with it. The second explanation is that the questioners are intended to understand that they should ask questions which related to their life and seek guidance regarding the affairs which actually led to righteousness. This latter view has been preferred by Zamakhsharī, although he did not reject the other two. The third explanation which he offered is far-fetched and, moreover, it ignores the reports about there being a historical context. Instead of relying on the historical situation, a symbolic explanation of the clause in question is sought.

"Approaching houses from the back has been thought to refer to the crooked questions which those people asked."<sup>(9)</sup>

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(9) Al-Kashshāf, vol.I, p.234.

If reference was made in the āya to matters or affairs rather than houses, such an explanation could be acceptable as a type of metaphorical usage, but as it stands, the explanation is far fetched.

Istitrād, in fact, has been treated as a common feature of the style of the Qur'ān. Listed among other examples of this figure are 35:12

"Not equal are the two seas, this is  
sweet, grateful to taste, delicious to  
drink and that is salt, bitter to the  
tongue. Yet of both you eat fresh  
flesh and bring forth out of it  
ornaments for you to wear, ...?"

According to Zamakhsharī, the first part of the āya is intended as a parallel to the contrast between believer and unbeliever, thus the latter part about the benefits of sea and river is by way of istitrād. It appears as if the tenor is one of reference to the different signs of God in which the whole āya fits quite logically; no need, therefore, exists to resort to rhetoric for understanding the āya. However, the second view which Zamakhsharī professes may be acceptable. He explains that the contrast is probably carried on throughout the āya, in which case the reference to the benefits of the sea will indicate that whereas even the sea has some benefits, the unbeliever on the other hand (who, in the first part of the āya has been

compared to the sea) is void of any use.<sup>(10)</sup> He supports the latter view by quoting a similar Qur'ānic contrast, 2:74

"Then your hearts became hardened thereafter  
and are like stones, or even yet harder,  
for there are stones from which rivers  
come gushing, and others split, so that  
water issues from them ..."

Obviously, the description of stones in these terms is a satiric allusion to the possibility that even the stones, to which the children of Israel have been compared in the āya, may be softer and more sensitive than them.

What, then, is istitrād and how far does it explain the abrupt shifts in the sequence of āyas?

'Askarī's illustration of the device of istitrād from the Qur'ān is in 41:39

ومن آياته أنك ترى الأرض خاشعة فإذا أنزلنا عليها الماء اهتزت وربت .  
ان الذى أحيّاها لمحي الموتى . انه على كل شىء قدير .

'Askarī comments that the sequence moves from the signs of God to His ability to resurrect the dead and that the foregoing reference to rain and how it revives earth is used as an introduction to the new subject. The purpose of 'Askarī here is not to explain the āya; rather he uses the āya to illustrate a rhetorical device. Whether or not this particular āya is typical of the device in question depends on what we regard the main emphasis of the āya to be on. It is very difficult

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(10) Al-Kashshāf, vol.3, p.605.

to decide whether the emphasis here is really on the theme of signs or on that of the attributes of God. If 'Askarī's view is accepted as to what the āya sets out to say, then it seems to fit his definition of the device of istitrād: "It is that (when) the speaker picks up a certain theme (ma'nā) but, as he passes through it, he picks up another, making the first a means to the second."<sup>(11)</sup> Definitions offered by other rhetoricians do not seem to make the figure as straightforward as 'Askarī explains it. Sometimes it was termed husn al-Khurūj (smoothness of transition or, literally, fairness of exit)<sup>(12)</sup> and at other times the latter was distinguished from it. Ibn-Rashīq, for example, tried to draw the distinction between the two terms as follows:

"That a poet finds himself (engaged) in describing something but he wants to (deal with) something else. If, then, he breaks off and (later) resumes his first subject this breaking off is istitrād. If, on the other hand, he carries on with the new subject, this is khurūj; most people call both practices istitrād but the correct term is what I have explained."<sup>(13)</sup>

(11) As-sinā'atayn, p.398.

(12) Badī' al-Qur'an, p.49.

(13) Al-'Umda, vol.2, pp. 31-32.

Apart from the terms and their definitions, the examples which are used to illustrate the device vary among themselves but they all exhibit a type of transition from one theme to another. One commonly quoted āya is 11:95 "So away with Midian, even as Thamūd was done away!" This example hardly illustrates anything remarkable enough to be regarded as a rhetorical figure. It looks a perfectly normal practice of the Qur'ān to refer to a previously mentioned story as a means of knitting various stories together and drawing a moral. In this sūra parallel stories of ancient peoples, who disobeyed the apostles of God, all come to similar conclusions - destruction. Āya 68 finishes the story of Thamūd thus: Surely Thamūd disbelieved in their Lord so away with Thamūd! Naturally, the phrase in 95 "as Thamūd was done away" echoes that earlier reference in 68, far back though it is.

Rhetoricians, presumably, copied each other's examples. Whoever quoted the previous example first for a kind of istitrād had probably been misled by earlier examples from verses with which the form of this āya could be confused. Almost every book on rhetoric quotes Samaw'al's<sup>(14)</sup> "We are a nation who do not regard death as a shame, if so regard it (the tribes of) 'Āmir and Salūl". This last phrase about the two satirized tribes is considered a classical example of istitrād. Some of the rhetoricians care to quote the verse that follows this, some do not, the verse being: "The love of death brings our fates near to us, while (by) hating it their

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(14) Cf. īdāh, vol.6, p.31, and see commentator for further references.



lives expand".

Even here the device is not altogether clear, for this looks more like normal contrast than a rhetorical figure. Perhaps there is more of this in another equally recurrent example. It is a verse by Abū-Tammām who is a master of rhetoric and one who constantly applied figures of rhetoric in his verse. Buhturī is reported to have narrated that Abū-Tammām recited the following verses and informed him that they contained istitrād:

"a swimmer whose galloping is heavy  
showering, who is trustworthy in running,  
never failing. ... If you see it ... you  
feel confident, unless you verify, that its  
hoof is a stone from Tadmīr or the face of  
'Uthmān." (15)

After four consecutive verses, the poet brought up his surprise - the description in which he was engaged was only an introduction to the main theme which was to satirize 'Uthmān. Yet the introduction is not a normal one, since he had made it look like a genuine, independently set theme until, all of a sudden, he embarked upon a new subject.

One would be inclined to accept this as a rhetorical device, regardless of whether it is used beautifully or not.

As for the earlier examples, they seem to differ from the latter quotation mainly in respect of the casualness of

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(15) Baqillānī, p.158.

shift from one theme to the other. Whereas Abu-Tammām seems to have set his target from the very start and concealed it only to reveal it later as a rhetorical surprise, most other examples are free from this element. They, too, contain an element of introducing a new theme, but it often develops naturally so that the new theme is brought in by way of comparison, contrast, association and only in extreme cases, by way of digression. It is uncertain, therefore, whether Arab rhetoricians were clear about what precisely istitrād was or whether they deliberately intended the figure to encompass varying degrees of shifts. However, there is reason to believe that the arrangement of themes within both the single verse and the more sustained compositions might have posed a problem to the early Arab poets. Consequently, some devices were developed to achieve skilful transition from one theme to another, and these were usually appreciated and hailed by early Arab critics. No strictly technical classification of these devices has, presumably, been intended. Rather, the more common feature of skilful transition has been looked for and given different terms by different scholars until, at last, it came to be known as istitrād.

If we go as far back as Jahīz, the term does not seem to have appeared yet, but the concept was surely there:

"... that is a kind of rhetoric (badi')  
in which the poet pretends to want a  
certain theme (ma'nā) then another occurs  
to him and he picks it up and develops  
it, as if unintentionally, but he actually

meant it (from the start)."(16)

The latter definition does not conform with Qazwīnī's:

"It (istitrād) is the transition from one theme (ma'nā) to another, which is associated with it but it is not (initially) intended to make the first a means to the second."(17)

Yet, Qazwīnī, himself, concedes the possibility of the second theme being initially intended. (18)

Definitions aside, the examples quoted are quite sufficient to establish a conviction that the term encompasses a variety of devices mostly in connection with the arrangement of themes.

This rather elaborate survey of the figure of istitrād has been intended to probe the possibility of its accounting for the feature of the shifts in the style of the Qur'ān. It will be seen that many types of these shifts in the Qur'ān do not easily lend themselves to classification. The Qur'ān, as well as early Arabic poetry, abounds in liberties of style which can hardly be described as rhetorical figures, nor can the classifications and definitions of rhetoric claim to catch the varying modes of expression with which early Arabic literature is distinguished. By their very nature and spirit,

(16) Cf. īdāh, vol.6, p.33.

(17) Ibid., vol.6, p.31.

(18) Ibid.

Qur'ānic structures would not make it easy to describe them in terms of rhetorical devices. Even the forms of grammar seem occasionally to fail to account for Qur'ānic structures; it is only reasonable, therefore, to suppose that the rules of rhetoric could not hope to contain the subtleties of stylistic features in the Qur'ān. It is possible, however, to trace the underlying spirit and detect general trends of expression.

It is, therefore, necessary to be very careful with regard to comments like those made by Zamakhsharī, concerning certain āyas which he has explained in terms of istitrād. If some of the shifts may be explained in these terms, many others will still remain which have to be treated at a very different level.

One kind of shift which occurs in the Qur'ān is that where a quotation ceases and the Qur'ānic comment follows abruptly. The difficulty in understanding the sequence is partly due to the absence of punctuation, but the mode of expression in the Qur'ān is to rely on common sense for the understanding of such problematic structures and, indeed, for many other things. Examples are 27:34 قالت ان الملوك اذا دخلوا قرية افسدوها وجعلوا اعزة أهلها أذلة. وكذلك يفعلون According to one interpretation, the last phrase و كذلك يفعلون is God's comment in support of the speaker's (Bilqis) statement.<sup>(19)</sup> However, the phrase could also be a continuation of the statement. According to Zamakhsharī, it might be the speaker's own comment intended as a general statement about the habits of kings to support her earlier specific proposition.

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(19) Al-Kashshaf, vol.3, p.364.



Zamakhsharī's view is questionable. The Queen's initial statement does not specify King Solomon, but it describes the habits of kings. Hence, it cannot be conceived that she would need to repeat herself.

Another example is 25:29. **يَا لَيْتَنِي لَمْ أَتَّخِذْ فُلَانًا خَلِيلًا .**  
**لَقَدْ أَضَلَّنِي عَنِ الذِّكْرِ بَعْدَ إِذْ جَاءَنِي | وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِلْإِنْسَانِ خَذُولًا .**  
A pause at **جَاءَنِي** is to be assumed, the closing phrase being God's comment on the whole tragedy.<sup>(20)</sup> Here, also, Zamakhsharī suggests the possibility of the phrase being either God's comment or the speaker's own. A third example is 12:52-53,

"The Governor's wife said, 'Now the truth  
is at last discovered; I solicited him;  
he is a truthful man.'  
'That, so that God guides not the guile  
of the treacherous.'  
'Yet I claim not that my soul was innocent -  
surely the soul of man incites to evil -  
except inasmuch as my Lord had mercy ..."

The general feeling among Muslim scholars is that the woman's statement ends at 'a truthful man', and that the following two statements are a continuation of Joseph's previous dialogue. There is, however, another view that all three statements belong to the woman, and that there is no need to

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(20) The āya describes how a certain person will regret his previous associations with a friend who misled him after he had believed.



assume a break in the utterance.<sup>(21)</sup> Zamakhsharī, who adopts the former view, though not dismissing the other possibility, argues that meaning is sufficient to warrant assigning this utterance to Joseph.

Another kind of shift is what may be called the semantic shift. In this type the sequence relates certain affairs and concepts which are not obviously related. Some of these, it has been noted, are related by context: social or historical. Others required a considerable intellectual effort by Muslim scholars in order to establish conceptual relations between them. One of the examples is 57:25:

"Indeed We sent Our messengers with the clear signs, and We sent down with them the Book and the Balance so that men might uphold justice. And We sent down iron, wherein is great might and many uses for men, and so that God might know who helps Him, and His messengers, in the unseen."

The previous quotation is one continuous āya. It might, therefore, be wondered how the sending down of Messengers, the Book and the Balance, on the one hand, could be related to the sending of iron on the other. Could it be the association of iron and the Balance as it has sometimes been suggested? This is a very unappealing explanation. A more profound suggestion

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(21) Al-Kashshāf, vol.2, pp.480-1.

is that iron and the might it possesses is referred to in connection with justice. It is to be inferred that in order that justice might be established some sort of force will need to be possessed and some influence exercised. Zamakhsharī's comment on this āya is not explicit but his paraphrasing strongly suggests the previous idea:

"(Wherein is great might) that is, fighting with it ... (and so that God might know who helps Him and His Messengers) that is, by using swords, spears and other weapons in the struggle against the enemies of religion."

A further example is 2:195:

"And expend in the way of God; and cast not yourselves by your own hands into destruction, but be good-doers; God loves the good-doers."

The relevance of sparing oneself to spending is probably that, by implication, one "casts oneself into destruction" when one fails "to expend in the way of God."<sup>(22)</sup>

The phrase, *وتزودوا فان خير الزاد التقوى* in 2:197 has been alternatively translated as:

Arberry: "And take provision; but the

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(22) Tabarī, vol.2, pp.200-206.

best provision is God-fearing."

Pickthall: "So make provision for yourselves  
(hereafter); for the best provision is to  
ward off evil."

Arberry has obviously rendered the preposition fa as 'but' in order to make the sequence comprehensible, but it is doubtful whether the language warrants this liberty. Pickthall, on the other hand, has selected the metaphorical interpretation of 'tazawwadū', thus making the second clause follow consequentially on the first one. This metaphorical interpretation of the imperative solves the problem, but the dominant view among Muslim exegists is that 'tazawwadū' is literally meant. The historical context is provided by the explanation that some people from Yemen used to refrain from carrying provisions for the pilgrimage, on the understanding that they had to rely on God. This attitude has, therefore, been advised against. According to this literal interpretation, which many scholars have adopted, the second clause would not seem to be a natural development on the theme. Zamakhsharī, who prefers the metaphorical explanation, accepts the literal one and professes that in this case the clause will mean: 'take provision and avoid (ittaqū) depending on other people and wearying them, for the best provision is fear of God (taqwa). The agreement between the words in brackets is significant. (23)

Tabarī, on the other hand, chose the literal explanation—

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(23) Al-Kashshāf, vol.I, p.244.

simply that those people who used not to take provisions were advised to carry them, for there is no righteousness in their habit; righteousness is in avoiding what they have been advised to avoid. In other words, he assumes a phrase to have been expressed which, if mentally provided, will make the sequence straightforward. (24)

Nowhere is this aspect of shifts more obvious than in the sequence of events when they are related in the Qur'ān. In such cases, many leaps are made and it is left for common-sense or the imagination to provide the necessary structural links. Structures like 7:160 .. ان اضرب بعصاك الحجر فانجست .. are very numerous in the Qur'ān. The use of the conjunction fa usually implies immediate consequences; here the step that logically follows the command is that the command was executed. Since the step is understood, it is curtailed. Of very similar nature is 26:63 "Then We revealed to Moses, 'strike with thy staff the sea'; and it clave, and each part was as a mighty mount."

In both āyas the implication is that no time had passed between the revelation of God's command to Moses, his execution of it and the consequences which are reported subsequently.

The significance of such common shifts is that, together with other elliptical structures, they form a style in which preference is given to implicitness, conciseness and to the bold and direct expression.

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(24) Tabarī, vol.2, pp.278-281.

## Section B

### CONNECTIVES

The term 'connectives' has been chosen here because it expresses the similarity of function between prepositions and conjunctions. That function is namely to link up and relate expressions within an utterance. Since this chapter deals with the way in which an āya is built up from smaller components and how these are interwoven, it has been found useful to devote a section to connectives for the role they play in that respect. Furthermore, it has been noticed that the role which connectives play in classical Arabic in general and in the Qur'ān in particular is greater than that which they have in modern Arabic prose. A simple connective is sometimes used in the Qur'ān to express a concept which has come to be expressed, in modern Arabic, by a phrase. This feature means that the expression of thoughts is more economical in the use of words. As the Qur'ānic usage of connectives is very idiomatic, they sometimes create an image, sometimes ambiguity and, on the whole, they have great stylistic impact.

It has been seen that sometimes the components of one āya may seem to be independent; they may be laid one by the side of another without the use of a connective. Yet, on many other occasions where connectives are actually used, they do not indicate a definite co-ordination. It seems that the absence of a connective may be as significant as the presence of one. Let us start by examining the rules which govern the absence or presence of a connective.

There seems to be a general agreement that when two



independent sentences, each containing a separate idea, follow one another, a conjunction is normally introduced. For example, Zamakhsharī contrasts 2:5 أولئك على هدى من ربهم وأولئك هم الضالون with 7:179 أولئك كالأنعام بل هم أضل ، أولئك هم الغافلون for the absence of the conjunction 'wa' in the latter and its presence in the former. He comments:

"The two statements are varied in the first āya and hence the conjunction, whereas they are the same in the second. The assertion against them as being like cattle is equal to that they are heedless, which means that the second sentence is asserting what is included in the first, hence it is not joined (by a conjunction)."

Similarly, 2:14 قالوا انا معكم انما نحن مستهزئون has been seen to bear the same contrast with such structures as in 4:142 يخادعون الله و هو خادعهم and with 3:54 . و مكرها و مكر الله .

Jurjānī explains in this respect that the absence of a conjunction between انما نحن مستهزئون and the subsequent clause in the next āya الله يستهزئ بهم is owing to the fact that the latter is a quotation of what they actually used to say. It was, therefore, impossible to connect the two statements.

A feature which interested both Zamakhsharī and Jurjānī<sup>(25)</sup>

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(25) One cannot be sure who was more dependent on the other,

is the absence of conjunctions in a series of narrated

quotations as in: ان دخلوا عليه فقالوا سلاما

قال سلام قوم منكرون .. فقربه اليهم قال .. فاجس منهم خيفة. قالوا ..

The phrases which start with قالوا might seem to need a conjunction to link them up with other phrases, but, it is thought that in these and similar cases, the phrases sound as if they were made in reply to a possible question. The question which is assumed is: what, then, did so and so say? There comes the answer: he or they said ... It is only in cases where the context makes a question very likely, that such words as qāla and qālū introduce clauses without a conjunction.

One wonders if this is the case why a conjunction is used to introduced qālū after ان دخلوا

عليه for the context makes it equally likely that the clause introduced by fa-qālū is in answer to the question: 'What then did they say?' Of course, it must be appreciated that any attempt to explain such idiomatic use of conjunctions will have to be flexible rather than definitive.

Jurjānī's analysis has led him to a definition more or less like that of Zamakhsharī about the rule for presence and absence of conjunctions. However, it is a more flexible and less definite conclusion:

"the conjunction is left out when there

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for very often we find echoes of Zamakhsharī in Jurjānī. Though they are contemporaries, Zamakhsharī was born and died before Jurjānī. The former was also more elaborate in his treatment of the Qur'ān.

is either complete association (ittisāl)

or complete dissociation (infisāl).

Conjunctions, (on the other hand) are for those (clauses) which are intermediate and whose state lies between the two states (i.e., complete association and complete dissociation)."

In this connection it also did not escape the attention of some scholars of Arabic that series of adjectives are often strung together, sometimes with, sometimes without conjunctions.

Contrast: 68:10-13 "And obey thou not every mean swearer, backbiter, going about with slander, hinderer of good, guilty aggressor"

with 33:35 "Lo! men who surrender unto Allah, and women who surrender, and men who believe and women who believe, and men who obey and women who obey, and men who speak the truth and women who speak the truth ..."

Whereas in the first example the conjunctions are left out, in the second they have been introduced. This in Arabic has been taken to imply that in the first example the adjectives refer to one and the same person, while in the second they refer to various groups of people, none of them necessarily possessing all those qualities. It is interesting that in English the latter āya has been rendered in different ways by translators: some, for example Arberry, leaving out the 'ands'; some, like Pickthall, whose translation has been chosen for this particular āya, introduce them. The meaning in the translations does not seem to have been affected by the inclusion

or omission of the conjunctions.

In Arabic, there is always some sort of effect; this is implied by most authorities, though they differ on the nature of that effect. One view is that the presence of conjunctions between different adjectives indicates that each adjective is independent,<sup>(26)</sup> while another controversial view is that the conjunction wa, in particular, is used to indicate a repetition of adjectives.<sup>(27)</sup> A third view which is noteworthy is the one expressed by Ibn-al-Zamlakānī. He noted that in the Qur'ān the attributes of God are rarely connected by means of conjunctions with one another. As an example of these he refers to 59:22-24:

هو الله الذى لا اله الا هو عالم الغيب والشهادة هو الرحمن الرحيم  
هو الله الذى لا اله الا هو الملك القدوس السلام المؤمن المهيمن  
العزیز الجبار المتكبر سبحان الله عما يشركون هو الله ...  
"He is God; there is no God but He. He

is the knower of the unseen and the  
visible; He is the All-merciful, the  
All-compassionate. He is God; there is  
no God but He. He is the King, the  
all-Holy, the All-peaceable, the All-  
faithful, the All-preserver, the All-  
mighty, the All-compeller, the All-  
sublime ..."

(26) Burhān, vol.2, p.446.

(27) Ibid., p.452. Zarkashī reports this view but does not explain it.

It has not, however, escaped his attention that elsewhere the attributes are joined by conjunctions, namely, in 57:3, "He is the First and the Last, the Outward and the Inward". The presence of conjunctions here is explained as owing to the contradictory nature of these attributes. In support of this explanation Ibn-al-Zamlakānī refers appropriately to a parallel example, namely 66:5, "... women who have surrendered, believing, obedient, penitent, devout, given to fasting, who have been married and virgins too".

عسى ربه ان يبدله أزواجا خيرا منكن مسلمات مؤمنات  
قانتات تائبات عابدات سائحات ثيات وأبكارا.

It is obvious that these adjectives are not connected by conjunctions, except for the last two which are not compatible with one another. It must be remembered that Arabic does not employ the English device of using 'and' (or wa) to connect the final words in a series.<sup>(28)</sup>

Zamakhsharī commented on a similar problem - the contrast between 26:208 and 15:4. In the first there is no conjunction whereas in the second there is, but the structure is almost identical otherwise. What, then, is the reason? Normally, he explains, there should be no conjunction but it is introduced sometimes to stress the association between a noun and the adjective which is attributed to it.

The second problem with regard to conjunctions is that they seem to interchange. Ibn-al-Athīr notes that the conjunction wa is not the same as fa, although it may be

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(28) Tibyān, pp.129-30.



confused with it. (29) He refers to 18:28

... ولا تطع من أغفلنا قلبه عن ذكرنا واتبع هواه وكان أمره فرطاً

The conjunction wa is here used where normally a fa would be expected. This has been taken by Ibn-al-Athīr to reflect on the meaning of the phrase, أغفلنا قلبه ; it must be taken to mean 'we have found his heart neglectful' rather than 'we have made his heart neglectful'. The point here is whether the relation between the two phrases aghfalnā qalbahu and ittaba'a hawāhu should be one of consequence in which case they would be joined by a fa, or whether it should be one of succession and the wa in that case is sufficient.

Similar structures may sometimes be connected with a wa and other times with a fa or otherwise. Contrast 2:35 with 7:19,

The first is ... أَسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَكُلَا

The second فَكُلَا " " " "

This difference has been understood to imply a change of meaning in the verb 'skun'. Whereas in the first āya it means 'go and live', in the second it might mean 'reside'. This view appears to be hairsplitting, but its implication is that the use of fa in the second āya makes it slightly different from the first one in which the wa is used. One cannot help feeling that where the fa is used the implication is that the eating follows as a consequence of inhabiting, while the wa implies independent and yet related commands. This feeling probably incited Karṣanī to suggest the previous distinction between

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(29) Jāmi', p.202.

two senses of the word 'dwell'.<sup>(30)</sup> Rāzī adopted the same view but added that the second āya probably refers to the time before Adam entered Paradise, and therefore the imperative 'skun should mean 'enter'; in the first one the imperative means 'dwell' (i.e. الزم ) for it comes after the entry of Adam had taken place.<sup>(31)</sup>

The case in 12:109 ( ... أفلم يسيروا في الأرض فينظروا ) is less difficult, for, there, the idea of consequence is obvious unlike 30:9 أولم يسيروا في الأرض which is simply joined to a similar preceding structure, namely, the one in āya 8.

Zamakhsharī also dwells on the contrast between 39:49 and 39:8. The former is فَإِذَا مَنِ الْإِنْسَانَ ضَرَّ دَعَا and the latter is the same except for the use of wa instead of fa. Zamakhsharī raises the question 'why'. In answer he suggests that the former is preceded by āya 45 and is consequentially related to it. He uses this example to illustrate one of the subtleties in the use of connectives in Arabic. Apparently, he explains there should be no relation between the resentment of those people to God, which is the content of 45, on the one hand, and the readiness of man to call upon God when overtaken by affliction. The relation would seem to be of contradiction rather than of consequence. Zamakhsharī's illustration of this figure is as follows:

"You say that Zayd is a believer in God,

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(30) Karmanī, p.25.

(31) Rāzī, p.300.

so (fa) if any affliction befalls him, he seeks refuge in Him. There is no problem in the causal relation here. Yet you may say that Zayd is an unbeliever, so (fa) if any affliction befalls him he seeks refuge in God, and you use the fa here as you did there (in the previous example). It is as if the unbeliever when he seeks refuge the way a believer would do, is mistaking his unbelief (kufr) for belief (īmān), and is treating it as if it were the same in making it a cause for seeking refuge. You are, then, bringing out the unbeliever's inversion (of things). Don't you see that with this speech you intend to show your amazement of him. (32)

It is obvious that Zamakhsharī in this attempt has highlighted the aspect of the metaphorical usage of connectives. Because they are not always used in their normal literary sense and, further, because they interchange, these deserve close attention.

The variation of preposition in 9:60

انما الصدقات للفقراء والمساكين والمؤلفة قلوبهم ..  
وفي الرقاب والfarmين وفي سبيل الله وابن السبيل .

is a good example of how even prepositions may be used to create images. Zamakhsharī notes that, within the āya, the 'l' (for)

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(32) Al-Kashshāf, vol.4, p.134.

has been replaced by the fi (in) so as to emphasize the eligibility of the last three categories. This āya deals with the question of alms-distribution. The fī, he thought, has the effect of stressing the right of some categories of people to alms because it implies containment. Some prepositions, it seems, come to acquire certain images through constant use in specific contexts. When this image is intended, therefore, the appropriate preposition will be used in order to evoke it, even though the preposition normally used in that structure might be different. This is often facilitated by the recognized interchangability of Arabic prepositions. A clear illustration of this metaphorical use of prepositions is in the classic example 20:71 و لاصليكنم في جذوع النخل .. where fi (in) is used metaphorically instead of 'alā (on) in order to suggest how forcefully they will be pierced onto the trunks of palm trees. Again, Zamakhsharī points out a similar image in 34:24 لعلی هدی أو فی ضلال مبين .. The prepositions are skilfully varied so as to evoke, for the guided person, an image of being proudly on ('alā) horseback while the misguided person is given an image of being helplessly drowned in (fi) darkness.

That connectives are interchangeable is an established fact, though this aspect of interchangability is apparently subject to some literary considerations, such as the ones quoted above. It is not, however, possible to give a precise formulation of these conditions for the interchanging of connectives. Yet, the fact remains that the literary use of these enjoys an important place among the various elements of elevated style.

It is thought, for example, that fī may be used in the sense

of ma'a as in 27:12

وَادْخُلْ يَدَكَ فِي جَيْبِكَ تَخْرُجُ بَيْضًا مِنْ غَيْرِ سَوٍ فِي تِسْعِ آيَاتٍ إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ .

where fī tis'i āyāt means 'together with nine signs'. Fī is also used in the sense of ba'd as in 31:14 وَفَصَّالَهُ فِي عَامَيْنِ where fī 'āmayn is taken to mean 'after two years'.

'Alā may be used in the sense of fī as in 2:102

وَاتَّبِعُوا مَا تَتْلُو الشَّيَاطِينُ عَلَىٰ مَلِكٍ سَلِيمَانَ ..

The previous examples are taken from Zarkashī; (33) he seems to have followed the example of Ibn-Qutayba who listed examples of prepositions used in the sense of other prepositions. (34) It is doubtful, though, whether this method is of great literary value, for prepositions are used idiomatically and in a very flexible manner, so that it is almost futile to try to define their meaning. It would be more fruitful to stick to an inductive method, by means of which it will be possible to outline the range of meaning which each preposition encompasses. Nevertheless it is undoubtedly useful to point out where a remarkable deviation from the normal use of a preposition takes place. In such cases an approach like that of Zamakhsharī's, which has been illustrated above, is quite acceptable since the ultimate reason for deviations is usually stylistic.

On the other hand, grammatical definitions do not reveal all the effect and value which connectives have. The functional 'inna', for instance, is not known in grammar to have a connective value, namely to connote a causal relation between clauses. But this value is more than obvious from a

(33) Burhān, vol.4, pp.302 and 284.

(34) Mushkil, pp.565-78.



survey of a number of āyas where it is used:

(35) قالوا لا تعجل انا نبشرك بغلام عليم 15:53

يا بني اقم الصلاة وأمر بالمعروف وانه عن المنكر واصبر ... 31:17  
ان ذلك من عزم الأمم

... ولا تخاطبني في الذين ظلموا انهم مغررون 11:37

وما أبرئ نفسي ان النفس لامارة بالسوء .. 12:53

It is clear from these examples that there is a linking value for inna, since the clause which follows it appears to have a causal relationship with that which precedes it. Jurjānī has devoted a section for this functional, inna, and noted that if inna is omitted the link between the sentences or clauses is lost unless it is replaced by the fa, but he further notes that even when replaced by the fa, the sense is not exactly the same. (36)

In fact, grammatical definitions sometimes appear to retard the comprehension of utterances in which some connectives used idiomatically play a major role. Hence the confusion over 6:1-2

الحمد لله الذى خلق السموات والارض وجعل الظلمات والنور ثم الذين كفروا بربهم يعدلون | هو الذى خلقكم من طين ثم قضى أجلا واجل مسمى عنده ثم أنتم تمثرون .

In two consecutive āyas, the conjunction 'thumma' is used three times, but the sense in which it is used is not the same every

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(35) Jāmi', p.201. 'Sentence assumed in the sense of cause'.

(36) Dalā'il, p.304.

time. To the unaffected ear, the first 'thumma' sounds like a perfect 'yet' and so has it been translated by Pickthall. Many Arab scholars, however, have failed to see the straightforward designation of the connective here, probably due to an unnecessary pre-occupation with the grammatical role of 'thumma'. For example, Zarkashī quotes this comment on the previous āya. Thumma, here, is an indication of the difference (tafāwut) between the level of creating and making (on the one hand) and the level of deviation (on the other). He also referred to another comment on this āya, "that thumma is introduced here for the vast difference between disbelief and the creation of skies and earth".<sup>(37)</sup> Obviously, these comments are the results of a pre-occupation with the grammatical definition according to which thumma is an expression of temporal delay. As far as the literary sense is concerned, in the previous two āyas the word is used twice to imply amazement at people, who despite evident proof of God would remain suspicious and look for partners. Nevertheless, reference to the original sense of the word may be useful in so far as it illustrates the manner in which the development from the basic meaning to the peripheral one comes about. Zarkashī's own conclusion is, therefore, acceptable for he seems to notice an analogy between the different usages of thumma: "It is for temporal delay, ... but it may also be for dissimilarity of qualities and other things without any temporal delay being intended".<sup>(38)</sup> Zamakhsharī skilfully avoided the grammatical question by

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(37) Burhān, pp.266-67.

(38) Burhān, vol.4, p.268.

suggesting that thumma in 6:1 is to indicate that their deviation and suspicion in spite of all the signs is regarded as improbable. The word he uses is istib'ād which implies distance, thus hinting at the analogy between distance in time, which is supposed to be the original meaning of the word, and abstract distance, i.e., the improbability of suspicion in God. In fact he makes his analogy clear elsewhere on discussing the use of thumma in 20:82 وانى لغفار لمن تاب وآمن وعمل صالحا ثم اهتدى There, he notes that "the word for temporal delay (kalimat at-tarākhī) indicates the difference of the two levels as it indicates the difference between the two times in 'Zayd came to me, then 'Amr' ..."

In the following three examples the use of thumma gives a different feeling each time:

In 74:18-20 انه فكر وقدر فقل كيف قدر ثم قتل...  
it gives the sense of 'again'.

In 46:13 ان الذين قالوا ربنا الله ثم استقاموا  
it gives the sense of 'then', or 'further'.

In 6:1 ثم الذين كفروا بربهم يعدلون  
it gives the sense of 'yet'.

This illustrates how connectives can have numerous meanings. Similar illustrations could be made from the usage of other conjunctions. For example, the aw has caused considerable controversy owing to its use in a way which some scholars have mistaken for its normal use in uncertainty. Again the problem

seems to be one of failing to see the rhetorical figure in the use of the conjunction. The phrase أَنَاهَا أَمْرًا لِي in 10:24 is a deliberate use of ambiguity in order to create uncertainty rather than express it on behalf of God.

Examine also phrases like:

- in 2:74 فَهِىَ كَالْحِجَارَةِ أَوْ أَشَدَّ قَسْوَةً  
or in 37:147 إِلَى مِائَةِ أَلْفٍ أَوْ يَزِيدُونَ  
or in 16:77 كَلِمَاحٍ الْبَصَرِ أَوْ هُوَ أَقْرَبُ  
or in 53:9 فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَرْبَعِينَ

When seen together, the use of aw in these āyas constitutes a pattern. There is an element of exaggeration which must be deliberate hyperbole.

The previous survey has been intended to illustrate how flexible the use of connectives is and how this use may sometimes be metaphorical rather than literal. This, together with the omission of conjunctions, has importance for the understanding of the relationship between various clauses. Hence, it must be fully understood in order to carry out any investigation into the nature of sequence in Arabic and particularly the Qur'ān.

Section C

PARALLELISM

The Concept

It has been seen that long āyas normally consist of short member-clauses which are closely inter-related. The nature of such inter-relations between members is so rich and subtle that no one term can explain it. This section, it is hoped, will shed some light on one type of relationship which is often detectable in long Qur'ānic āyas. The term parallelism has been used to describe similar structural features in the Old Testament and later applied to early Arabic prose. In an essay about parallelism in Arabic prose, some orations by the early caliphs have been analysed, but no reference has been made to the Qur'ān.<sup>(39)</sup> It is quite clear that the term as it has been introduced and applied in that article is comprehensive of many features and covers a wide range of relations so that it is particularly useful for the description of relationships whose variable and elastic nature is more comprehensible when conceived in its generality. The following quotation from Eissfeld has been used by Beeston to introduce the concept and may be found useful for the same purpose here:

"The poetic texts consist of verses formed  
from two - or more rarely three - stichoi  
combined, in which the stichoi or members

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(39) Journal of Arabic Literature, vol.5, pp.134-146.



are in some way parallel to each other, in that they offer variations on the same idea. This may come about by the second member repeating the content of the first in different words (synonymous parallelism), or it may be that it sets it off sharply with contrasted thought (antithetic parallelism), or it may be that it simply takes the thought further and completes it (synthetic parallelism)."(40)

No effort will be made here to stick to the categories outlined by Eissfeld, particularly since they seem to describe a kind of parallelism not exactly like the one we notice in the Qur'ān. Beeston has used the term to include parallelism in grammatical functions, acoustic elements as well as semantic ones. He further noted that the various features of parallelism

"are employed in the khutba to form delicate patterns of great complexity and subtlety, thus avoiding the monotonous effect which would be created by straight parallelism alone."(41)

A question might now be raised as to whether this aspect of parallelism has been noted by Arab rhetoricians at all.

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(40) The Old Testament, an introduction, p.57.

(41) Journal of Arabic Literature, vol.5, p.135.

Ye , it has, but their description of it suggests that the general concept of parallelism might not have been envisaged. Instead a number of terms have been coined to designate some of the individual items, which describe elements within the general theory but which were probably never conceived of as different categories within a greater general rhetorical concept.

The term mutābaqa<sup>(42)</sup> or tibāq has commonly been used in Arabic rhetoric to describe utterances in which two or more phrases or even words of an opposite nature are contrasted. This is similar to the use of the term 'antithetic parallelism'. When the semantic contrast is not perfect, the figure has sometimes been labelled muqābala.<sup>(43)</sup> What Eissfeld has called synthetic parallelism would probably come under the Arabic rhetorical term murā'āt an-nazīr (matching of equals) or more literally (attention to equals). As for the acoustic echoes which Beeston has chosen to include among features of parallelism it was regarded as a completely separate figure and was labelled tajnīs.

In short, the components of this concept, parallelism, appear in Arabic rhetoric as separate identities, but the examples which illustrate each different figure seem to suggest that rhetoricians have often adopted hair-splitting methods. In view of the fact that this thesis attempts a more general outline of stylistic features, the concept of parallelism will

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(42) The origin of the word is disputed and hence the meaning of the rhetorical term.

(43) Burhān, vol.3, p.459.

be adopted and the āya will be examined in its light.

### Relevance

Parallelism is relevant to this chapter not as a rhetorical figure but in so far as it is responsible in part for the continuity of the āya's structure. Reference has been made earlier to the presence of distinguishable units within the āya and some of the intricate relations have been examined and described as a series of echoes and references. That, however, is intended as a way of explaining the development of theme in a multi-clause structure and as a means of understanding the Qur'ānic device of co-ordination. This section, on the other hand, highlights one aspect of structural continuity gained through semantic, grammatical or acoustic parallelism.

There are some simple straightforward examples of parallelism in the Qur'ān, such as 2:216,

1. كتب عليكم القتال وهو كره لكم
2. وعسى أن تكرهوا شيئاً وهو خير لكم
3. وعسى أن تحبوا شيئاً وهو شر لكم
4. (a) والله يعلم (b) وأنتم لا تعلمون

The first member is not simple, but contains a subtle rhythm of the k sound; four such sounds are divided in half with two appearing at the beginning of the utterance and the other two at the end of it. The middle is left free. The second member is a direct semantic contrast of the third. What makes it very simple is the repetition of all the functionals and

pronouns in a way which makes the two members identical in structure. Only the contrasting items are substituted for one another, namely khayr is substituted by sharr, and takrahū by tuhibbū.

In the fourth member, the contrast is internally made between two parts: a) wal-lāhu ya'lamu, b) wa antum lā ta'lamūn. The semantic contrast is obvious between Allāh and the human pronoun and between knowing and knowing not. This parallelism is further strengthened by the repetition of the conjunction wa and by the fact that the acoustic sound lā in the name of Allāh is echoed in lā - meaning not.

Again, of similarly simple nature is the parallelism in 3:26

1. قل اللهم مالك الملك
2. تؤتي الملك من تشاء
3. وتنزع الملك ممن تشاء
4. وتمز من تشاء
5. وتنزل من تشاء
6. بيدك الخير
7. انك على كل شيء قدير

The first member is again not contrasting with any other member but all the other members are an elaboration on the introductory idea which is presented in it. Then 2 and 3 contrast with each other as do 4 and 5. Member 6, however, semantically echoes the idea in the first member, namely, the concept of ownership is echoed in bi-yadika (in your hands). Al-khayr, which is the second word in the 6th member, may be conceived as a variation of al-mulk. Thus bi-yadika al-khayr is almost a restatement



of the idea in the first member - that being 'owning sovereignty'. The seventh member is one of common pausal phrases which generally seal the āya and is therefore a semantic relative of all the previous statements; it not only echoes but corroborates and carries further the ideas set in them.

Of relatively simple nature is also 6:103

لا تدركه الأبصار وهو يدرك الأبصار وهو اللطيف الخبير  
ان يمسسك الله بضر فلا كاشف له الا هو  
وان يمسسك بخير فهو على كل شيء قدير

It is not very common, however, that you find simple examples of parallelism which do not at the same time embrace subtleties as might be eclipsed from immediate attention by the more obvious contrasts. 6:103, for example, includes an echo from 102, mainly in the pausal phrase. As for 6:17, the acoustic pattern is strikingly delicate. The sound 'flā kāshifa lahū illā hūw' is almost retained but in a different arrangement in 'fa huwa 'alā kulli shay'in ...'. The 'sh' sound engulfed between 'las' in the first phrase has, in the second one, been set free.

The previous examples, more or less, illustrate what had been described as antithetic parallelism and their obvious grammatical and semantic contrasts accounts for their simple straightforward nature.

Apart from certain long āyas which have been referred to, this type of parallelism is also to be found in many short sūras, particularly Meccan ones, where contrasted images and phrases link up the short āyas. Sūra 92 is one good example, for it consists of short āyas, usually phrases of four words or less, which stand in contrast to one another semantically and



grammatically. "The night" is contrasted with "the day", "the male" with "the female", "he who gives and is God fearing and confirms the reward most fair" with "him who hoards and deems himself independent and cries lies to the reward most fair". The first "is eased to the state of ease" and the other "is eased to adversity." This type of parallelism is carried throughout the *sūra*. Contrast is actually the main theme, being first introduced by the contrasting images of day and night, male and female, a comprehensive statement about diversity of striving and diversity of ultimate result.

Examine also *sūras* 93 and 94. In these two the type of parallelism is not 'antithetic'; the one *āya* elaborates on the other rather than contrasts it. In addition to such *sūras* as are wholly constituted from parallel *āyas*, there is a great number of passages consisting of similarly parallel *āyas*. In *sūra* 77, for example, *āyas* 1-5 are an exact example of grammatical parallelism. So are *āyas* 8-11 which are all *idhā* phrases ending with a passive verb followed by the feminine *tā*.

Further examples will be found in 79:1-5 and 81:1-8, 10-13, 17-18 and also in 82:1-5. There seems to be a pattern of *idhā* phrases forming a passage of grammatical parallelism whenever a succession of them occurs. In most cases, such parallelism is further emphasized by the presence of either rhyme or assonance. It has been noted that the features of the Meccan *sūra* may generally be related to the need for a memorable type of utterance. Parallelism, like rhyme and what may be called the suspense structure in Meccan *sūras*, plays the role of attracting the attention as well as aiding the memory to take in and retain those *sūras*. This is so because the simple

semantic and grammatical relations of contrast in a simple parallelism furnished the mind with the kind of association which makes any utterance memorable.

A more subtle type of parallelism is to be found in longer āyas, particularly in Medinan sūras. Subtlety is a feature of elevated style but it does not quite strike the attention as does the simpler form of contrasting parallelism. If we survey the Qur'ān for that type of parallelism which is the presence of close semantic relations as well as acoustic ones, we find that it really abounds in such structures. As for acoustic patterns, it is doubtful whether any elevated Arabic composition, poetic or prosaic, could really do without them. The language itself, it may be assumed, facilitates the tendency to create acoustic uniformity by making it possible to choose from a wide range of synonymous semantic items. Hence, no attempt will be made here to analyse acoustic patterns except where they are too obvious to be ignored.

One example of a contrast set in a comparatively complex structure is in 2:257,

1. الله ولي الذين آمنوا يخرجهم من الظلمات الى النور
2. والذين كفروا أولياؤهم الطاغوت يخرجونهم من النور الى الظلمات
3. اولئك اصحاب النار هم فيها خالدون

The contrast is obvious between Allāh and false deities (tāghūt) and so is it between those who believe and those who disbelieve; the relation between Allāh and the believers is contrasted with the relation between the unbelievers and their patrons, the false deities. Again a contrast is drawn between

the bringing forth from darkness into light, on the one hand, and the bringing forth from light into darkness. What makes the structure less simple than the previous examples is the arrangement of themes, so that God is the theme in the first member whereas the semantically contrasting word for Him taghūt is not allowed to take the corresponding grammatical position in the second member. In other words, the semantic contrast is not the same as the grammatical one. It is very likely that the reason for this is that God should be exalted and revered by giving His name the major role implied by His being the theme of the sentence. A similar consideration probably prevailed in 5:118

ان تعذبهم فانهم عبادك  
وان تغفر لهم فانك انت العزيز الحكيم

The adjective Mighty (al-'Azīz) might easily have been substituted by Merciful (al-Rahīm) to echo the quality of mercy mentioned at the beginning of the member, but it seems that the contrast has been made with the grammatical equivalent in the first member. Semantically, however, 'Then they are your servants' is echoed in what sounds like 'then you are their Lord', but instead of this rather naive phrasing an attribute which suggests Lordship has been chosen, Mighty, and then modified by the quality of wisdom to suggest either mercy or punishment.

Eissfeld's term of synthetic parallelism has been defined too widely to constitute a stylistic measure. To 'simply carry a thought further or complete it' would seem to apply to almost all phrases within one sentence, or indeed to all sentences within a paragraph. However, he may have meant a feature similar to the one very common in the Qur'ān, namely, where

parallel members within an āya corroborate and reinforce a certain idea as it is introduced in the first member.

6:107 provides an excellent example of these.

1. ولو شاء الله ما أنشركوا
2. وما جعلناك عليهم حفيظا
3. وما أنت عليهم بوكيل

There is a profound semantic and grammatical relation between members 2 and 3. Together they echo the same idea in 1 in as much as it is an indication of the whole matter being up to God. In the other two members it states the idea more clearly by advising the Prophet that he had no authority over them, nor was it his responsibility to make them believe.

Similarly, the idea in the initial setting of 9:81 is elaborated and developed by the subsequent members in the āya so that when the āya is concluded, the whole theme is evident:

1. فرح المخلفون بمقعدهم خلاف رسول الله
2. وكرهوا أن يجاهدوا بأموالهم وأنفسهم في سبيل الله
3. وقالوا لا تنفروا في الحَرِّ
4. قل نار جهنم أشد حرا
5. لو كانوا يفقهون

Apart from the development of thought here, there is an obvious contrast of semantic items, together with a few echoes which unite the various members of the āya. Fariha in the first member is semantically contrasted with Karihū in the second. The contrast in this āya is sharply set and apparently intended



to be ironical, for the rejoicing of those who were left behind is ironically at their tarrying behind the Messenger of God. Conversely, their aversion to fight is an aversion of the most honourable business, namely, striving in the way of God. The parallelism is clear between 'the Messenger of God' and 'the way of God'. 3 and 4 develop the irony by contrasting the heat these people feared with the heat of hell. The word qālū is echoed in qul and harr is echoed in ashaddu harra. The fifth member confirms that the underlying tone is irony by making it all a question of understanding.

#### Acoustic Features

It has already been noted that in literary Arabic some harmony in sound is always to be expected. What is noticeable, however, is that in certain places, there seems to be more than just harmony - a kind of prevalence of one or more consonants echoing throughout the āya and occasionally throughout the whole passage. Where this occurs, it is so natural that it may escape the rhetorician's attention. Tajnīs, the rhetorical figure which describes the choice of equi-sounding words in utterances, is not a common feature in the Qur'ān. Indeed, it is doubtful whether any of the Qur'ānic examples usually quoted as tajnīs is anything more than coincidental.

The following example illustrates how subtle the recurrence of one sound is and yet very effective. The K sound in 17:14      اقرا كتابك كفى بنفسك اليوم عليك حسيبا  
Iqra' kitābaka kafā binafsika-l yawma 'alayka hasība. The arrangement is almost chiasmic, for the K followed by a vowel



forms the first syllable in the two first words, then later it forms the last syllable of two more words. The sound kitā is rhythmically equivalent to kafā. On the other hand, the segment baka is an exact rhythmical parallel for sika. Because the sound K denominates the second person in Arabic, the suggestion of its recurrence here is a great reinforcement of the semantic idea. It sounds like five fingers all pointed to the addressee.

In 5:27-32, which is a passage about the first murder in human history, the parallelism of phrases is accompanied by a balance of acoustic sounds among which the sound Q is the most predominant. When the rough nature of this consonant is taken into account, it may reasonably be assumed that the harmony between sound and meaning has been achieved through this recurrence. This becomes all the more likely when we notice that elsewhere in the Qur'ān there is similar correlation between theme and sound. The passage 2:243-6, for example, is overwhelmed by the same sound Q and the theme is struggle. Similarly, the theme of punishment is often associated with the recurrence of an explosive D and B in sūras 11 and 50.

Thus, when applying a general term like parallelism, the whole of the Qur'ān may be seen as an illustration of the figure. That is because in Arabic all elevated style must exhibit a certain degree of 'balance' or harmony between both acoustic and semantic elements of each structure.

Section D

THE PAUSAL PHRASE

This section is related to the previous one in so far as it describes the relation of the last phrase in the āya to its theme. In the section about parallelism, the relation between different members was discussed, but the pausal phrase, although it could be incorporated there,<sup>(44)</sup> has been excluded as a separate section for various reasons.

One reason for discussing the pausal phrase separately is that it is an outstanding feature of Qur'ānic style. It has attracted the attention of many scholars, both in the Muslim world and in the West, because of its effectiveness and the problems which it raises. Bell, for example, described it as follows:

"Statements regarding God occur frequently at the end of verses, especially in the long sūras where the verses also are of some length. Where the verses are short, the word or phrase which carries the rhyme forms as a rule an integral part of the grammatical structure and is necessary to

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- (44) Under the figure of mutābaqa, rhetoricians refer to some pausal phrases, because they echo a sense already in the āya. See Idāh, vol.6, p.22, where 6:103 is referred to with regard to the relation of the pausal phrase to the body of the āya.

the sense. Usually the phrase is appropriate to the context but stands apart from the rest of the verse. These detachable rhyme-phrases<sup>(45)</sup> most of which carry the assonance in  $\bar{i}$  (ل) - tend to be repeated, and to assume a set form which recurs either verbally or with slight changes in wording. ... There is a certain effectiveness in the use of these sententious phrases regarding God. Mostly they close a deliverance, and serve at once to press home a truth by repetition and to clinch the authority of what is laid down. They act as a kind of refrain."<sup>(46)</sup>

These phrases, it may be added, are usually about some of the universal truths of Islam. They relate to the fundamentals of faith. Whenever they are used, they, at the same time, become reinforced by virtue of repetition and also acquire further illustration by being used in the context of a situation.

Another reason for discussing these pausal phrases separately is that they usually stand apart in grammatical

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(45) The term rhyme-phrase has been substituted by pausal-phrase to avoid the false impression that it carries the rhyme. In fact, even the assonance which is normally observed is sometimes varied.

(46) Watt, Bell's Introduction to the Qur'ān, pp.71-72.

structure and normally bear no acoustic relation to the rest of the āya. This is understandable when we remember that they form a limited number of maxims found in āyas throughout the Qur'ān wherever the meaning invites them. Only very occasionally do we get a pausal phrase which is designed for exclusive use in one āya, and not verbally repeated elsewhere.<sup>(47)</sup> Since the element of a grammatical or semantical contrast with the rest of the āya is not normally present in them, the pausal phrases are treated here as a different manifestation of how various members, within the āya, are interwoven. Furthermore, it would be more appropriate to examine pausal phrases of the Qur'ān in terms of a category, because they form special patterns, whose meaning is influenced not only by the particular āya in which each pausal-phrase is used but also by the various other situations with which they are associated. For example, the combination of 'all-forgiving' 'all-merciful' is qualified by the situations in which these attributes have been used just as the situations themselves reflect and modify the sense of those statements.

It is worth noting that this feature of Qur'ānic style is unique in Arabic literature. Although the feature which is labelled in Arabic rhetoric tawshīh<sup>(48)</sup> or, alternatively, irsād<sup>(49)</sup>, is the closest, yet this Qur'ānic feature is still quite distinct. In the former, the reference is to such verses where the first hemistich contains an indication of what the

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(47) For example 24:30 and 2:186.

(48) As-sina'atayn, p.382.

(49) Idāh, vol.6, p.25.

pausal word (qāfiya) is. An example of this figure is in:

idhā lam tastatī' shay'an fada'hu  
wa jāwizhu ilā mā tastatī'u

The word tastatī' in the first hemistich provides a clue for what the final word will be. On the other hand, the pausal phrase is not necessarily entailed by the exact words which precede. It need only be related to the general theme of the āya, either by qualifying it, summing it up or by carrying it further.

Qur'ānic exegetes have generally tended to link up the pausal phrase to the theme of the āya by paraphrasing it in such a way as to make the words refer to the particular theme. For example, in 2:29,

هو الذى خلق لكم ما فى الأرض جميعا ثم استوى إلى السموات  
فسواهن سبع سموات وهو بكل شىء على بصيرة

"It is He who created for you all that is  
in the earth. Then turned He to the  
heaven, and fashioned it as seven  
heavens; and He has knowledge of everything."

Zamakhsharī comments on this phrase by paraphrasing it as follows:

"And He has knowledge of everything,  
therefore He created them even, perfect



and without any irregularity."<sup>(50)</sup>

Obviously, Zamakhsharī thinks that the link between the phrase and the rest of the āya is one of reason. His view is tenable but it might be wondered why a preposition of reason has not been used instead of a simple conjunction. Could this probably be due to the tendency in the Qur'ān to leave the nature of relations in certain cases ambiguous and thus achieve a sense of mystery?

Likewise, Tabarī comments on 9:14-15      .. ويشف صدور قوم مؤمنين

ويذهب غيظ قلوبهم ويتوب الله على من يشاء والله عليم حكيم

"and bring healing to the breasts of a  
people who believe;  
and He will remove the rage within their  
hearts and God relents to whomsoever He  
will;  
God is All-knowing. All-wise."

Tabarī takes the adjectives separately, commenting on each one by adding explanatory phrases without breaking the sequence.

"All-knowing ('alīm), of all his servants,  
he adds, and those who are worthy of  
repentance will be forgiven (yutābu  
'alayhim) and those who are not will not  
be aided to repent. 'All wise' (hakīm)

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(50) Al-Kashshāf, vol.I, p.123.

in directing his servants from a state  
of disbelief into a state of belief ..."(51)

Whereas Zamakhsharī's phrasing gives the feeling that he regarded the phrase to be explanatory of what preceded it, Tabarī's seems to suggest that the pausal phrase is complementary.

It seems easier to understand the specific relation of a pausal phrase to the rest of the āya when it is connected by inna, for example, rather than the wa. For instance, the phrase fa'inna l'lāha 'azīzun ḥakīm in 8:49, "... but whosoever puts his trust in God, surely God is All-mighty, All-wise". The fa followed by inna indicates that pausal phrase is intended to be an apodosis of man. Thus, the phrase implies that God, by virtue of his being mighty and wise, is indeed worthy of being relied on - this being an outright contradiction to the statement of the hypocrites which is quoted at the beginning of the āya.

Tabarī's comment on 4:34 suggests that he has treated the presence of inna between the pausal phrase and the one which precedes it as implying causal relationship. The final part of this āya is:

"If they then obey you, look not for  
any way against them; God is all-high  
all-great."

Tabarī's comment on the pausal phrase is:

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(51) Tabarī, vol. 10, pp.90-91.

"God has authority ('uluw) over everything,  
so do not, O people, oppress your wives,  
on account of your authority, if they obey  
you ... for God has more authority over  
you than you have over them."

The latter comment helps to point out the role of inna in providing the link between the pausal phrase and the āya. But, in addition to that, it helps us understand that the commentator is conscious of the fact that pausal phrases are rich in implications. In many cases a pausal phrase is not only relevant but also alludes to various relevant facts which the listener is left to contemplate.

In certain cases, however, the relevance of the pausal phrase is not altogether obvious. Even in such cases, the assumption among Muslim scholars is that the phrase is bound to be relevant but that it may take more intellectual effort to discover how it is relevant than do other phrases. As a matter of fact, some scholars have taken pains to explain the obvious. In 36:78-79,

"And he hath coined for us a similitude,  
and hath forgotten the fact of his  
creation, saying: Who will revive these  
bones when they have rotted away? Say  
He will revive them Who produced them at  
the first, for He is knower of every  
creation."

The Arabic وهو بكل خلق عليم does not immediately reflect the causal relation as indicated by 'for' in the translation. However, a modern scholar has found it necessary to justify this particular pausal phrase. He points out that it might be thought that the phrase 'and He is able to do all things' could be considered a more adequate alternative. Then he goes on to explain that the revival of decayed and usually intermingled bodies would require the knowledge of distinguishing between different creations.<sup>(52)</sup> Although the phrase 'and He is able to do all things' could be an alternative, by virtue of its being more general, the question should not arise as to why it has not been used instead. The phrase which is used in the āya is more precise and it even echoes the aspect of creation which is the theme there.

Nor is there any reason for rethinking the pausal phrase in 29:62

الله ييسط الرزق لمن يشاء من عباده ويقدر له ان الله بكل شيء عليم

"God outspreads and straitens His  
provision to whomsoever He will of  
His servants; God has knowledge of  
everything."

The obvious implication of the phrase is that that God's will with regard to outspreading or straitening provision is associated with His encompassing Knowledge.

There are, however, some interesting problems. The reference

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(52) See Ali M. Muhsin, mushkilāt-al-fawāsil (2) in Al-wa'y-al-Islāmī, p.18 (Kuwait).

to God being forgiving and clement in 2:225 may seem to modify the implicit warning against breaking oaths. Abū Hayyān is quoted as having explained that the reference to these qualities indicates that even those who intentionally break an oath should hope for forgiveness.<sup>(53)</sup> The āya is:

لا يؤاخذكم الله باللغو في أيمانكم ولكن يؤاخذكم بما  
كسبت قلوبكم والله غفورٌ حلِيمٌ

"Allāh will not take you to task for that which is unintentional in your oaths. But He will take you to task for that which your hearts have garnered. Allāh is forgiving, clement."

Baydāwī thought that forgiving is related to the first part since He does not take them to task for the unintentional but 'clement' is related to the latter part. God, he professes, is clement for He delays the punishment for the breaking of an oath in case the person repents.<sup>(54)</sup>

It would seem that the emphasis of the āya, here, is on the fact that unintentional oaths are not regarded as proper oaths; thus, the latter part of the āya is simply in further explanation of this truth. If so, then the pausal phrase is referring to the principle on which the rule is based and that is God's forgiveness and clemency.

Qutb's general comment on the pausal phrase of 2:228 seems

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(53) Ibid., p.17.

(54) Baydāwī, Tafsīr.



quite appropriate:

"the two attributes impress the authority  
of God Who sets these rules and His  
wisdom in ordaining them."

Again, more generally:

"In both (attributes) the matter is  
linked up with God and the hearts  
are directed to Him in all that is  
said or done." (55)

Another problem is in 22:60

ذلك ومن عاقب بمثل ما عوقب به ثم يغني عليه لينصرونه  
الله ان الله لعفو غفور

"And who so has retaliated with the  
like of that which he was made to  
suffer and then hath (again) been  
wronged Allah will succour him. Lo!  
Allāh verily is Mild forgiving."

Zamakhsharī, later copied by Rāzī, dwelt on the relevance  
of this pausal phrase to the āya explaining that it could imply  
one of three things:

either it is hinting at the fact that retaliation, though  
it has been permitted here, is not the most favourable response

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(55) Zilāl, vol.2, p.360.

and, therefore, God's forgiveness is offered to those who choose to retaliate;

or, it is a hint to the wronged persons that, though they have God's support in case they retaliate, they had rather forgive their aggressor;

or, finally, the presence of these two attributes may be an allusion to the fact that God is capable of punishment, for forgiveness and mildness are signs of power.

Tabarī does not hesitate in choosing the first theory. He explains briefly that God is forgiving to those who retaliate against initiators of aggression.

Other scholars selected a different view from all the previous ones. They argue that the emphatic phrasing of God's promise of support does not make it plausible to assume that retaliation is, nevertheless, a kind of forgivable sin. According to this view the hint is at the possibility of retaliation being overdone by some people; hence the reference to God's forgiveness.

It seems that Tabarī's view, which is also Zamakhsharī's first suggestion, is more tenable, particularly in view of the general Qur'ānic concept of tolerance. The word 'afw' is referred to in 2:237, "To forgo (ta'fū) is nearer to piety" and, yet more explicitly in 42:40, "The guerdon of an ill-deed is an ill the like thereof. But whomsoever pardoneth ('afā) and amendeth, his wage is the affair of Allāh. Lo! He loveth not wrong-doers."

Another interesting feature in the use of pausal phrases is that they are sometimes varied even though the āyas to which they are attached are the same. For example, 14:34 reads:

وَأَنَّا كَم مِن كُلِّ طَالَسَاتَمُوهُ وَأَن تَعْدُوا نَعْمَةَ اللَّهِ لَا تَحْصُوهَا إِن الْإِنْسَانَ لَظَلُومٌ كَفَّارٌ

"And He giveth you of all ye ask of Him,  
and if ye would count the favour of Allāh,  
ye cannot reckon it. Lo! Man is verily  
a wrong-doer, an ingrate.

Though the āya is partly repeated in 16:18, the pausal phrase is varied: 

وَأَن تَعْدُوا نَعْمَةَ اللَّهِ لَا تَحْصُوهَا ،  
. إِن اللَّهَ لَغَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

"And if ye would count the favour of Allāh  
ye cannot reckon it. Lo! Allāh is indeed  
Forgiving, Merciful."

Zarkashī reported an explanation by ibn-al-Munīr:

"Man on receiving the favours of God is  
wrong-doing and ingrate whereas God in  
awarding him these favours is Merciful  
and Forgiving ..."

Zarkashī adds that the pausal phrase in 16:18 refers to the attributes of God because the context within that sūra is about God's attributes. On the other hand, 14:34 is mentioned in a context of describing man, so it was more appropriate to refer to man's qualities in response to God's favours. (56)

Two more facts may be added to Zarkashī's observations.

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(56) Burhān, vol.I, p.86.

14:34 is in a passage where the assonance requires a long 'ā' vowel followed by a consonant, usually 'r'.

The second notable fact is that in sūra 16, where the other pausal phrase is used, the attributes of mercy and forgiveness form an underlying theme. There is a tendency in many Qur'ānic sūras for one or more pausal phrases to recur, forming a motif and giving the sūra a recognizable identity.

In the same manner, the three āyas, 5:44, 45, 47, have the slightly varied pausal phrase: "Whoso judgeth not by that which Allāh hath revealed: such are disbelievers;" the last word is exchanged with wrong-doers in 45 and evil-livers in 47. Zarkashī reported a view that the words in fact refer to the same thing but are varied for the sake of variation.<sup>(57)</sup> Some scholars, however, feel that variation is not a sufficient reason, by itself, to justify the use of a word, save where it coincides with the proper sense.<sup>(58)</sup> The case for the use of the three words in the previous example can be argued from both the angle of variation and that of proper sense. Elsewhere the pausal phrases appear to assume the form of a parallelism rather than variation. In sūra 10, āya 4 has a pausal phrase "and painful doom because they disbelieved", which is paralleled by the pausal phrase in 8, "will be the fire because of what they used to earn". The contrast between bimā kānū yakfurūn and bimā kānū yaksibūn is more clearly illustrated in Arabic. Similarly, liḡawmin ya'lamūn in 5 contrasts liḡawmin yattaqūn in 6. Although each pausal phrase is perfectly in context

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(57) Burhān, vol.I, p.87.

(58) Ibid., p.72.

with the respective āya, the parallelism is equally attended to.

Again in 32:26-27, there is a notable contrast between:

"will they not then heed?" and "will they not then see?"

Zarkashī has noted and appreciated a further contrast between the beginning of each one of the previous two āyas and its pausal phrase. As the āya 26 refers to the guidance to be drawn from the experience of earlier generations, the pausal phrase is made to suit this by referring to 'hearing'. On the other hand, reference to 'seeing' at the pausal phrase of 27 perfectly matches the beginning of the āya, namely: "Have they not seen how we lead the water".

Seen in the general perspective of the present chapter, the use of the pausal phrase demonstrates how the practice of the Qur'ān, in relating different components and in linking the smaller units to the more sustained utterances, differs from almost all other forms of literature. The previous illustration of this feature will also confirm the observation, noted in the previous chapter, that the āya bears all the evidence of being an integral unit of the Qur'ān, though it is closely interwoven with other units. The pausal phrase is an important device for sealing one āya and indicating a pause, and also of suggesting the link with other similar pausal phrases.



## CHAPTER IV

### EMPHASIS

#### AS ACHIEVED BY STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS

The style of the Qur'ān is predominantly emphatic. No one who reads this holy book, with some attention to its distinguishing features, will fail to notice the emphatic quality which is perhaps required by the very nature of the message. As the message of the Qur'ān is religious and therefore authoritarian, the style is consequently authoritative and emphatic. However, it may not always be clear how the emphasis is achieved and what specific device is used in a given example. Sometimes there may be more than one device operating at the same time; at other times a certain device may appear to be used for other purposes as well as emphasis. In each single case we have to examine the grammar and rhetoric of the language used, the context and the feeling which the text produces.

The Arabic language is rich in devices and methods by which emphasis and similar effects can be achieved. The language encompasses varieties of inversions, elisions and remote references. All these licences have been used to achieve various effects in poetry and the Qur'ān. Among the common methods of emphasis in Arabic are the particles: inna, la- and qad, certain morphological items such as the forms of fa'āl, fa'āla and taf'īl, as well as other grammatical usages. However, only those devices which affect the structure of the sentence will be dealt with in this thesis.

Section A

INVERSIONS

The suggestion that in some structures there is an element of inversion implies that there is a norm in language structure from which deviations may be made. The latter proposition has caused a great deal of theoretical discussion in stylistics and some stylists have denied it and held that every sentence or structure is unique; that every structure conveys a particular idea which could not be conveyed in any other way. Whether or not every utterance is unique is only relevant to this discussion in so far as it affects the use of the term 'inversion'. No stylist would deny, however, that certain structures do seem to call attention by their peculiar word order. Thus, the argument can be limited to whether the difference between two sentence structures of almost the same words is one of different meanings or only one of added effect.<sup>(1)</sup> The position maintained here is that in most cases where an alternative structure is feasible, or sounds even more 'normal', there is an obvious element of emphasis. This element may, sometimes, amount to an alternative meaning and thus change the content of the utterance and at other times be merely a requisite but not inevitable ornament.

Statements by Arabic scholars vary on the theory which governs the nature of Arabic structures. One commonly quoted

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(1) See e.g. Richard Ohmann: "Prolegomena to the analysis of prose style" in "Essays in Stylistic Analysis", edited by Howard S. Babb.

statement provides the general basis for the theory, in as much as it stresses the existence of subtle differences between similar structures.

Ibn al-Anbārī, says Jurjānī, was reported to have said that al-Kindi, the philosopher, rode to (meet) al-Mubarrad and said to him:

"I find redundant usages in the language of the Arabs."

"Where is that?", asked al-Mubarrad.

"Arabs say: 'Abdu 'llāhi qā'im', then they say: 'Inna 'Abda 'llāhi qā'im' and again 'Inna 'Abda 'llāhi la-qā'im'.

"No", answered Mubarrad, "meanings differ according to the differences in (the use of) words. The first statement only asserts the fact of 'Abd-Allah standing, the second is an answer to a question, the third in response to a denial of the assertion." (2)

Ibn Khaldūn repeats the same idea with a slight variation but does not relate it to any authority. (3)

As regards inversions specifically, the general rule is that important words, whether they be nouns, verbs or phrases, usually come first. Sibawayhī is quoted as saying, in connection with the pre-position of a certain part of speech.

"(It is) as if the Arabs made prepositive  
that (element of the sentence) which it is

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(2) Dalā'il, p.303.

(3) The Muqaddima, p.484.

important to highlight and which is of greater concern to them, even though they were (still) interested in both (subject and predicate)."(4)

Ibn Khaldūn declares that every specific situation requires a certain form, that Zaydun jā' (came) is not the same as Jā'a Zayd since the prepositive element is the one that enjoys the speaker's concern. Thus, in the former statement, the speaker focusses on the person who came, whereas in the latter, the action of coming, not the person, is focussed on. (5)

Suyūṭī states:

"Arab stylists almost unanimously held the prepositive (element) (ma'mūl) conveys restriction, whether (that element) be a preposition and its genitive, an object or an adverb." (6)

On the other hand, most stylists seemed to accept the use of inversions as a poetic licence. Ibn Jinnī, for instance, says:

"When you find a poet committing these necessary (devices), however ugly they may

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(4) Sibawayhī, al-Kitāb, vol. I, p.24.

(5) The Muqaddima, p.484.

(6) Itqān, vol.2, p.51.

seem and however much they seem to be innovations in the rules (of language), you should be aware that they are not valid evidence for any deficiency in the poet's language, nor of his inability to select clear expressions. It is rather a sign of his boldness - the poet, in this case, is like a horseman who goes along on a wild horse without reins."<sup>(7)</sup>

Sibawayhī, himself, devotes a section of his Kitāb to poetic licences and includes among them examples of hysteron-proteron.<sup>(8)</sup> 'Askarī, however, advised against the use of such necessary devices, despite their occurrence in early poetry and despite the licences given by Arab linguists.<sup>(9)</sup> Jurjānī's position, on the other hand, is unique. He maintained:

"It is wrong to assume that hyperbaton is sometimes useful and sometimes not; to explain it at one time as (an indication of) stress and another time as a licence for the convenience of the author's rhyme".<sup>(10)</sup>

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(7) Al-Khasā'is, vol. 2, p.392.

(8) Sibawayhī, al-Kitāb, vol.I, p.16.

(9) As-sinā'atayn, p.150.

(10) Dalā'il, p.140.



His view is:

"There is no merit in preferring one utterance to another unless it has an effect on meaning which the other does not have." (11)

He further declares:

"No (word) order occurs in an utterance without the intention of a specified presentation (sūra) and an effect (ṣan'a). These would not be the same if the order was changed."

What seems to make Jurjānī's position tenable is that he usually depends on the Qur'ān which, being more like prose, does not take the licences that are normally employed in poetry. Thus, he avoids a descriptive method which would make it necessary to accommodate poetic inversions, especially those occurring in early Arabic poetry.

#### Applications

انما يخشى الله من عباده العلماء innamā yakhsha 'Allāha min  
'ibādihi 'l-'ulamā'. (35:28). "Only those of his servants fear God who have knowledge." The word Allāh, a prepositive object, makes the meaning of this āya distinct from another close sense

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(11) Dalā'il, p.140.

which could be understood if the subject, 'ulamā', came first. Should the words be rearranged thus: innamā yakhsha l-'ulamā'<sup>u</sup> Allāh, the meaning would be that the 'ulamā' fear only God; the implication is that though other people do fear Him, they, unlike those who know, fear others beside Him. Such an implication is not meant in the āya and is deliberately avoided by the inversion.<sup>(12)</sup> Thus Pickthall's translation: "the erudite among his bondsmen fear Allāh alone", does not seem to convey the exact meaning. According to Zamakhsharī, there are two quite distinct ideas in making the object, Allāh, postpositive or prepositive. When 'Allāh' is postpositive the meaning is changed to become that they (those who have knowledge) fear no other than God. Though this idea is also expressed elsewhere in the Qur'ān, (and fearing not any one except Him 33:39), the sense is quite different in this āya, says Zamakhsharī.<sup>(13)</sup>

Similarly, all objects when they are placed as prepositives bring about this restriction. Another example is the fourth āya of the opening sūra, "Thee only we serve; to thee alone we pray for succour". (1:4). Again in 39:14, the object 'Allāh' is made prepositive: "Qul Allāha a'bud". This could be conceived in the more normal shape: "Qul A'budu Allāh", but the effect would never be the same. "Say: 'God I serve, making my religion His sincerely' is clearly laying the emphasis on God. When contrasted with the earlier āya: "Say: 'I have been commanded to serve God", it becomes clear that: Allāh<sup>a</sup> a'bud restricts the service to Him, as if in answer to a question:

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(12) Dalā'il, p.322.

(13) Al-Kashshāf, vol.3, p.611.

who do you serve? The other form, 'I serve God', may be an answer to the absolutely different question: 'What do you do to God?'

(6:100). وجعلوا لله شركاء الجن

The above āya provides a good illustration of how subtle shades of meaning are produced by slight changes in the order of words and are usually lost in the process of translation.

Arberry: "Yet they ascribe to God, as associates, the jinn, though he created them."

Pickthall: "Yet they ascribe as partners unto him the jinn, although he did create them."

Palmer: "Yet they made the jinn partners with God, though he created them."

In all these translations the meaning is more or less the same as Tabarī's interpretation.<sup>(14)</sup> But Jurjānī saw in this structure more than just the denunciation of the idea of jinn being made partners with God. Besides reporting the fact of their making the jinn partners with God, the placing of partners as a prepositive, says Jurjānī, has an additional value. It adds the idea that no partners, jinn or otherwise, should be made partners with God. If the word partners 'shurakā' was postpositive, the possibility remains that only the jinn should not be ascribed as partners. In its present form, the āya makes it very clear that their sin was mainly in ascribing partners with God; it proceeds to explain as a matter of fact

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(14) Tabarī, vol.7, p.296.

that the partners they made in this case were the jinn.<sup>(15)</sup>  
Zamakhsharī also referred to this implicit value of word-order  
in the āya, though not elaborately.

"If you propose to ask: Of what use is the  
inversion? I say: its use is to point out  
the gravity of ascribing a partner with God -  
whoever the partner may be: jinn, angel,  
human or anything else. Hence the name of  
Allāh is made to precede the partners."<sup>(16)</sup>

A similar example is the āya: 6:112

وَكذلك جعلنا لكل نبي عدواً شياطين الانس والجن . . .

"So We have appointed to every Prophet an enemy - satans of men  
and jinn..."

It is obvious that the structure is divisible into four  
parts:

I	وَكذلك جعلنا
II	لكل نبي
III	عدواً
IV	شياطين الانس والجن

Six logical arrangements are possible, but only four of  
these are worthwhile, as the other two, though they are logically  
possible, sound stylistically affected and grammatically awkward.  
In other words, the element of choice, stylistic choice, is

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(15) Dalā'il, p.280.

(16) Al-Kashshāf, vol. 2, p.52.

limited to one of the following:

(a) Part I & P.II & P.III & P.IV which is the structure as it appears in the Qur'ān.

(b) Part I & P.II & P.IV & P.III, i.e., وكذلك جعلنا لكل نبي شياطين الانس والجن عـدوآ  
So we have appointed to every prophet satans of men and jinn (as) enemies.

(c) Part I & P.IV & P.III & P.II, i.e., وكذلك جعلنا شياطين الانس والجن عـدوآ لكل نبي  
So we have appointed satans of men and jinn (as) enemies to every prophet.

(d) Part I & P.IV & P.II & P.III, i.e., وكذلك جعلنا شياطين الانس والجن لكل نبي عـدوآ

The Qur'ānic choice: "so We have appointed to every prophet an enemy - Satans of men and jinn", is by far the richest and most lucid. Differences between this structure and the second one (b), which is closest to it, are as follows:

1. The Qur'ānic structure is capable of being divided into two major parts: (i) "So we have appointed to every prophet an enemy". (ii) "Satans ...". The first part bears the emphasis and stands out as a universal statement; one that is conveniently independent. It matches with other statements in the Qur'ān which draw parallels from other prophets to the



experience of Muḥammad as a prophet. All universal statements are repeated in different places in the Qur'ān; so is this one: "Even so We have appointed to every prophet an enemy among the sinners". (25:31). That the word 'enemy' is indefinite further supports the view that this part of the āya is intended to stand independently as a universal statement. Only when it has achieved this effect, is it followed by the second part which serves as an expository annexation. Should the word 'enemy' be definite: "the enemy", the first part of the āya would have to depend on the second in order to make complete sense. At this point it may be worth noting that long structures in the Qur'ān are usually capable of being read in more than one way: either as separate related units or as a centralized sustained structure. The first āyas in the second sūra provide a good example of that feature.

ألم ذلك الكتاب | لا ريب فيه | هدى للمتقين

This may be read with change of punctuation.

ألم ذلك الكتاب لا ريب | فيه هدى للمتقين

or

ألم ذلك الكتاب لا ريب فيه | هدى للمتقين

2. The second structure, b, **وكذلك جعلنا لكل نبي شياطين الانس والجن عداً**,

though retaining the major emphasis on II, 'to every prophet', lays more emphasis on IV than on III. Here, the enemy is specified and the particular enmity of satans to every prophet is more significant than the presence of an enemy to every prophet.

3. In the āya itself, the phrase **شياطين الانس والجن** is grammatically either a second object or an appositional substantive when a postpositive, but only a second object as a prepositive.

As for the two other alternatives: c and d, they are closely related to each other, but they depart from the original structure of the āya more obviously than does 'b'. Both c and d shift the emphasis to P.IV making the theme of the statement the satans. It is as if the quality of these satans matters most; that they are enemies to every prophet would appear to be an elaboration on the main proposition. Both structures would be an adequate response to someone who wondered why satans of men and jinn are so opposed to prophets; the answer came that they are made such. However, c differs from d in that the former is straightforward placing one object after the other, whereas the latter places more emphasis on P.II, to every prophet, thus stressing the particularity of their enmity to each prophet.

It is surprising that Zamakhsharī does not refer to the interesting feature of word-order in this particular āya, nor does Jurjānī. In Burhān, Zarkashī refers to this āya, but only to suggest that the first object is postposed in order to bring the noun closer to the pronoun that refers to it, namely the hum in the sentence "Yū hī ba'duhum ilā ba'd".<sup>(17)</sup> His view may seem to be supported by some examples in the Qur'ān, such as 34:33, in the latter part of the āya -

وجعلنا الأغلال في أعناق الذين كفروا هل يجزون إلا ما كانوا يعطون  
 "and we put fetters on the necks of the unbelievers; shall they be recompensed except for what they were doing". Contrasted with a twin āya, 36:8 انا جعلنا في أعناقهم أغلالا فهي الى الأذقان فهم مقمحون  
 the noun aghlāl (fetters) precedes the prepositional phrase,

(17) Burhān, vol.4, p.25.

fī a'nāq, in the former but follows it in the latter.

Obviously, in each one of these āyas, the pronoun refers to the closest noun which precedes it, to the unbelievers in the first instance and to the fetters in the second.

Although the argument holds here, the question of pronouns is not normally an overriding consideration in the arrangement of words, particularly not in the Qur'ān. It is interesting that the previous example contains a pronoun, hum, that refers to a noun, (qawm), which appears two āyas before and yet it is referred to later in the four following āyas. Remote reference of pronouns in the Qur'ān is a feature which will be discussed later.

#### Verb and Noun

As in the case of two objects, when the noun or pronoun precedes the verb, or vice-versa, this too has been found to imply significant alteration of meaning. In the case of 21:62  
قالوا أنت فعلت هذا بالهنا يا ابراهيم  
Jurjānī observed that this is substantially different from the other possible form: أفعلت.  
The pronoun anta is made to follow the interrogative particle so as to mark the precise meaning, which is:

Arberry: "They said, 'so, art thou the man who did this unto our gods, Abrahām?'"

Pickthall: "They said: Is it thou who hast done this to our gods, O Abrahām?"

This is obviously different from the English: "Did you do this?"

The emphasis in the āya is on the person who did the action, not on whether the action was done at all. It also suggests that the action has been done by somebody; what remains to be seen is who. In support of this view, it has been pointed out that the question was followed by the answer: "He said: But this, their chief hath done it."<sup>(18)</sup> Zamakhsharī, on this āya, however, was more intent on the answer of Abraham. He explained that it is far from being a simple denial of the allegation. Abraham, according to him, was wittingly accepting the responsibility by implying that the other possibility was absurd, thus ridiculing his prosecutors.<sup>(19)</sup> Nevertheless, Zamakhsharī seems to accept the principle that emphasis changes according to the word which follows the interrogative particle - verb, noun or adverb. On 14:10 " قَالَتْ رُسُلُهُمْ أَفِي اللَّهِ شَكٌّ ؟ ", he commented that "the adverbial phrase followed the particle because the question is not about doubt, but the One who is doubted, that He should be beyond doubt."<sup>(20)</sup> Apparently, every translation must fall short of conveying this subtle aspect of the āya.

Arberry: "Their messengers said, 'Is there any doubt regarding God?'"

Pickthall: "Their messengers said: 'Can there be doubt concerning Allāh ...'".

The two previous translations seem to suggest respectively

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(18) Dalā'il, p.145.

(19) Al-Kashshāf, vol. 3. p.124.

(20) Al-Kashshāf, vol. 2. p.542.







Palmer's, however, is the closest to the Arabic: "Say: 'Other than God shall I take for a patron, ...'" The preceding examples illustrate the special effect which is produced by making the noun rather than the verb follow the particle.

In contrast to those, the following are examples of āyas in which the verb precedes: **أفأصفاكم ربكم بالبنين** "Hath your Lord then distinguished you by giving you sons ...?" (17:40), and **أصطفى البنات على البنين** "Has He chosen daughters rather than sons?" (37:153). The question in both examples implies negation and it is with regard to the act, not the actor. Some Arabs claimed that Angels were the daughters of God, the first āya is denouncing the claim<sup>(22)</sup> and putting up the sarcastic question whether they were favoured with sons by God. There is no emphasis on who favoured them, in fact they have not been favoured at all.<sup>(23)</sup> Similarly, in **أصطفى البنات على البنين** "Has he chosen daughters rather than sons?" Again there is no implication that somebody has made this choice but God has not - the meaning, rather, is whether such a choice has, at all, been made by God.

Jurjānī has also treated a more complicated example, **أفأنت تسمع الصم أو تهدي العمي** "Canst thou make the deaf to hear or canst thou guide the blind ...?" (43:40). There is obviously no question of somebody being able or claiming to be able to make the deaf hear. By thinking that unbelievers could be made to understand, Muhammad was, in other words, hoping to be able to make the deaf hear. He was, therefore,

(22) Tabarī on 17:40, vol.15, p.91.

(23) Dalā'il, p.146.

asked whether he especially had such an abnormal ability.

Jurjānī wrote:

"In short, the matter is that when the noun is preposed the rejection is directed at the person who claimed to do something or is claimed to have done something. You are saying, in that case, something like: 'he is not the one who can'. When, on the other hand, the verb is preposed, i.e., the question is 'did you', the meaning is not so." (24)

In the same manner, when the predicate is preposed a special emphatic effect is attained. In (59:2) و ظنوا أنهم مانعتهم حصونهم the text clearly deviates from the norm. It could be, I, و ظنوا أن حصونهم تمنعهم or alternatively but more strongly, II, و ظنوا أن حصونهم مانعتهم , or still more effectively, III, و ظنوا مانعتهم حصونهم . The choice of the Qur'ān is unrivalled by any of these in its emphasis. Because the predicate is made prepositive the idea of protection is stressed and the structure departs from the matter-of-factness which would otherwise govern it. Furthermore, the insertion of the pronoun 'hum' as a suffix to the particle anna makes the theme of the sentence shift to the people whom the āya describes; "them", it refers to. As a result of this thematic shift, the idea of over-confidence takes the form of sheer

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(24) Dalā'il, p.150.

arrogance. Their fortresses take a secondary place, the pronouns keep referring to 'them'; it is as if they think that the fortresses derive power from them. Here again the translations cannot hope to retain all the effect in the text.

Arberry: "and they thought that their fortresses would defend them against God."

Pickthall: "While they deemed that their strongholds would protect them from Allāh ..."

Similarly, in (19:46) أَرَأَيْبَ أَنْتَ عَنْ آلِهَتِي يَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ the predicate is preposed because the emphasis lies on it. Abraham's father is wondering if the gods could be undesirable to Abraham. The alternative structure أَأَنْتَ رَأَيْبٌ عَنْ آلِهَتِي يَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ would suggest that Abraham in particular is not likely to reject the gods; there would be no particular emphasis on the idea of rejection as a principle but rather on Abraham as the initiator of the action.

Arberry: "Said he, 'What, art thou shrinking from my gods, Abraham?'"

Pickthall: "He said: 'Rejectest thou my gods, O Abraham?'"

Palmer: "Said he: 'What! art thou averse from my gods ...'"

Pickthall's is a happier rendering of the āya with its subtle shades of meaning.

### Restrictive Structures

One type of emphasis is by restriction (hasr). Again there are various ways of expressing the idea of restriction, but we will only be dealing here with those which are achieved by inversion.

Zarkashī: "restriction is expressed not only by preposing the subject as pronoun, but also the agent, the object and the adverbial phrase governed by a preposition modifying the verb".<sup>(25)</sup> An example of the adverbial phrase made to precede the verb is قل هو الرحمن آمنا به وعليه توكلنا (67:29). The contrast between آمنا به and عليه توكلنا is that عليه precedes the verb, while به follows the verb which it modifies. There is emphasis on عليه which is the reason for it preceding the verb. On the one hand the reason for not restricting belief to God, alone, is that one is required to believe in other concepts, such as angels, apostles and resurrection. On the other hand, putting trust involves only God; hence the restrictive structure.<sup>(26)</sup>

### Translations

Arberry: "We believe in Him, and in Him  
we put all our trust."

Pickthall: "In Him we believe and in Him  
we put our trust."

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(25) Burhān, vol.2, p.414.

(26) Ibid.

The distinction between the two structures is brought out in Arberry's rendering but not in Pickthall's.

Another āya which contains a similar contrast is: (2:143)

لتكونوا شهداء على الناس ويكون الرسول عليكم شهيدا  
Literally: "that ye may be a witness against mankind, and that the messenger may against you be a witness." Zamakhsharī notes that in the first phrase the adverbial phrase follows, because the intention is merely to state that they are witnesses to other nations, whereas in the other phrase it precedes because the intention is to state the idea that it is to them that the Apostle is a witness.<sup>(27)</sup> The idea of specification is, however, distinguishable from that of restriction,<sup>(28)</sup> though both are achieved by inversions.

The adverbial phrase may also precede the verbal noun as in (30:44). 'alayhi preceding kufruhu is seen to have an effect which otherwise would not be realized - this is due to the restriction of the consequences of disbelief to the disbeliever.

A similar structure is to be found in ان الينا ايابهم (88:25, 26). Ilaynā is made prepositive in order to achieve the idea of restriction - that only to God is their return, not to any other. As for 'alaynā, it precedes in order to make the warning more emphatic, for it makes their being reckoned an affair of God. It is implied that He will see to it that they are reckoned.<sup>(29)</sup>

(27) Al-Kashshaf, vol.1, pp.199-200.

(28) Itqān, vol.2, p.52.

(29) Al-Jāmi' al-Kabīr, p.111.



The contrast between a prepositive adverbial phrase and a postpositive one is illustrated by two examples: لا ريب فيه (2:2) and لا فيها غول (37:47). Whereas the substantive precedes the adverbial phrase in the former, it follows it in the latter. Consequently, the meaning is substantially different. In the first āya the possibility of doubt is rejected absolutely; there is no element of comparison. If the adverbial phrase preceded here, the meaning would be that doubt may exist in regard to another book but not this one. In the second āya the adverbial phrase precedes to allude to the idea that that particular drink is free from anything which would cause pain, "wherein no sickness is", an idea that implies its superiority to worldly drinks which cause sickness. (30)

To this group belongs another āya which has sometimes been quoted as an example of inversion in the Qur'ān:-

(49:7). واعلموا أن فيكم رسول الله لو يطيعكم في كثير من الأمر لعنتم

Arberry: "And know that the messenger of God is among you. If he obeyed you in much of the affair, you would suffer,"

Pickthall: "And know that the messenger of Allāh is among you. If he were to obey you in much of the government, ye would surely be in trouble;"

It is exactly against this interpretation that many

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(30) Al-Jāmi' al-Kabīr, p.111.

commentators of the Qur'ān have argued:

Zarkashī:

"It may seem at first glance that the adverbial phrase is the predicate of the clause governed by the particle anna made prepositive, but that is false. What is stated is not that the apostle is among them, but that if he obeyed them ... etc., fīkum is only a state (hāl). The meaning, therefore, is 'know that the apostle of God, while among you, if he should obey you ... etc.'"(31)

On the other hand, Zamakhsharī:

"The sentence must not recommence with 'law', for that leads to a disjointed sequence. The clause governed by 'law' is related to what precedes as a state of one of the two pronouns: either the latent (i.e., referring to the state of rasūl who is not mentioned in the 'law' clause) or the prominent (i.e., referring to the pronoun 'kum' which is mentioned in both clauses). The implication is the same for both interpretations, namely, that the Prophet is among you in a state you need to change or you are in a state

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(31) Burhān, vol.I, p.307.

that you need to change; i.e., you try to make him act in the events as it occurs to you." (32)

Tabarī, however, seems to take the first part of the āya independently:

"Know, (O believers in God and His apostle),  
'that among you is the apostle of God',  
(and this implies that you should) fear God  
and (should) not forge falsehoods and tell  
lies, as God tells His apostle your news ... etc."

then Tabarī goes on to explain the other part in a separate paragraph. (33)

It would seem that Zamakhsharī's view is sound, in so far as we need to read the āya as one complete whole. What he has not pointed out, however, is that although there is no disjunction at rasūl Allāh, the verb 'know' covers both clauses. It is a common feature of Qur'ānic structure that a fair amount of interdependence of phrases is allowed, as has been shown earlier. Here, the āya seems to be readable as follows: Know that the apostle is among you, know that if he should obey you ... etc. There is considerable emphasis on 'that among you is the apostle of God', too considerable to dismiss the whole phrase as a 'state'. The structure forbids it. The fact

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(32) Al-Kashshāf, vol.4. p 361

(33) Tabarī, vol.26, p.126.

that fīkum is made to precede, is intended to bring home to those to whom the words are addressed the idea that the presence of the apostle among them is an important matter, one that laid a special code of behaviour on them.

Palmer's translation is closer to conveying this particular sense, both because he retains the inversion in 'among you is the apostle' and rather than break the āya in two different sentences, he divides it with a semi-colon. It runs: "And know that among you is the Apostle of God; if he should obey you in many a matter ye would commit a sin, ..."

#### Inversion Suspected

Many other āyas have been quoted by commentators as containing inversions, but most of those do not exhibit any feature of being emphatic. The only obvious reason for supposing the structures to have been inverted is the need for some rearrangement of structure before the sense is clear.

One of these is (9:55) فلا تعجبك أموالهم ولا أولادهم  
انما يريد الله ليغنيهم بها في الحياة الدنيا وتزهق انفسهم وهم كافرون

"So let not their riches nor their children  
please thee. Allāh thereby intendeth but  
to punish them in the life of the world  
and that their souls shall pass away while  
they are disbelievers."

Suyūṭī divides inversions into two types: those which pose problems of meaning and those which do not. He counts

the previous āya among the former type.<sup>(34)</sup> The problem which this āya poses is whether it is really intended to mean that wealth can be a means of agony, in this world. Obviously, the surface structure of the āya does mean this.

Tabarī reported the two views: One related to Qatāda and Ibn-‘Abbās, is that there is inversion in the āya. It should read: Let not their riches in this life please you, God only intends to punish them with it in the world to come. The other view is related to others including al-Hasan and Ibn Zayd that association of punishment with wealth refers to different disasters which befall people with regard to their wealth - to the believers it is reward, to the unbelievers a punishment, i.e., the āya should be understood as if it read - such disasters are rewards (in so far as they earn them rewards in Heaven). Tabarī chose to support the latter view and commented correctly that the obvious meaning should not be evaded for another interpretation which lacks proof. He also added that the other view has only been adopted by people who could not conceive of wealth as a punishment from Allāh on the unbelievers.<sup>(35)</sup>

Zamakhsharī, while not referring to the other view, clearly adopts the one that God intends to punish the unbelievers with their wealth in this life by exposing it to ransom, disasters and by compelling them despite their riches, to spend it (partially) on good works.<sup>(36)</sup>

Another example of an āya which is sometimes taken to

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(34) Itqān, vol.2, p.13.

(35) Tabarī, vol.10, p.153.

(36) Al-Kashshāf, vol.2, pp.280-281.



contain inversion, but may not do so, is (3:55) **واذ قال**

"When Allāh said: **الله يا عيسى اني متوفيك ورافعك الي**

O Jesus! Lo! I am gathering thee and causing thee to ascend unto Me." Itqān quotes it among the first type of inversions. (37)

It is taken to mean rāfi'uka wa mutawaffika which indicates that the raising happens before the gathering by God (wafā).

Again Tabarī has reported different interpretations of mutawaffika which some took to mean: causing you to sleep, others causing you to die. Those who interpreted wafā as death either said it was temporarily in order to raise him up to God or, on the other hand, claimed that there is inversion and the āya should mean that Jesus will be raised, purified, returned to the world and later gathered in by death.

Zamakhsharī interpreted the word peculiarly as preventing the unbelievers from killing you and thereby causing you to live your full lifetime. The Mu'tazilite view is that the murdered person dies before his allotted time has come. He naturally supports his view with linguistic evidence maintaining that wafā means completion.

A further example is 4:83 **واذا جاءهم أمر من الأمن أو الخوف اذاعوا به ولو رَدُّوه الى الرسول والى أولي الأمر منهم لعلمه الذين يستنبطونه منهم ولولا فضل الله عليكم ورحمته لاتبعتم الشيطان الا قليلا**

"And if any tidings, whether of safety or of fear, come unto them, they noise it abroad, whereas if they had referred it to the messenger and such of them as are

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(37) Itqān, vol.2, p.13.

in authority, those among them who are able to think out the matter would have known it. If it had not been for the grace of Allāh and His mercy ye would have followed Satan, save a few."

Al-Muhāsibī pointed out that this should be understood as it would if illā qalīlā were to follow immediately after adhā'ū bihī. (38) There seems to be a genuine problem here since the exemption may require a theological explanation. Tabarī reports four explanations, three of which are based on the idea of inversion and he finally adopts one of these.

Zamakhsharī does not seem to notice any problem, hence he interprets the āya straightforwardly, not attempting any rearrangement of word-order. If Zamakhsharī's view is accepted, there is a theological problem which needs explanation, namely, how even a few could not follow Satan without God's favour and mercy. On the other hand, if Tabarī's view is accepted, the stylistic effect intended by delaying the exceptive proposition must be explained.

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(38) Al-'Aql, p.479.

Section B

EMPHASIS BY PRONOUN\*

Pronouns are used very effectively to evoke, restrict and generally to emphasize certain aspects in the āya. Such effect has been noticed<sup>(39)</sup> in وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ (2:5) which is translated as "Those are upon guidance from their lord, those are the ones who prosper." The translation cannot illuminate the difference between وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ and وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ . The latter proposition is regarded by the grammarians as capable of meaning "those are the ones who prosper". Similarly, in تَجِدُوهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ هُوَ خَيْرٌ you would not find in Arberry: "Whatever good you shall forward to your souls' account, you will find it with God as better,". Pickthall has tried to convey this emphatic sense by adding 'surely': "Whatsoever good ye send before you for your souls, ye will surely find it with Allāh, better and greater ...". However, the emphasis in the text seems to be not only on the certainty of finding reward but also on the greatness and superlative nature of that reward.

Sibawayhī called such pronouns "distinctive" (damīr faṣl); the term is also sometimes translated as "pronouns of separation." He noted that these pronouns do the job of

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\* Here the term 'pronouns' is used broadly to express the Arabic concept of damīr which, along with ordinary pronouns, includes the implicit reference to the noun by verbal form.

(39) Burhān, vol.2, p.409.

corroboration.<sup>(40)</sup> As examples of such pronouns, he quoted

ان ترن أنا أقل منك مالا وولداً (18:39) where anā is a distinctive pronoun. Another example which Sibawayhī gave is: (34:6)

و يرى الذين أوتوا العلم الذى انزل اليك من ربك هو الحق

Zamakhsharī, on the other hand, assigned more than one role to the distinctive pronoun. In أولئك على هدى من ربهم وأولئك (2:5), he noted that hum is a distinctive, whose role is to make clear that the noun following it is a predicate and not an adjective, and to corroborate and to state that the quality of the attribute is one which, exclusively, belongs to the subject.<sup>(41)</sup>

Elsewhere, he appears to assign a different role to the pronoun. In أم اتخذوا آلهة من الأرض هم ينشرون (21:21), he notes that hum is intended to give the sense of particularity. It is as if the unbelievers thought that their gods, who are also understood in the pronoun hum, possessed the power to resurrect and further that this power was exclusively theirs unshared by any other.<sup>(42)</sup>

A commentator on Zamakhsharī's Kashshāf noted that this may not be so. He observed, appropriately, that the following āya does not support Zamakhsharī's view:

"If there were therein gods beside Allāh, then verily both (Heaven and Earth) had been disordered." (21:22) Should the sense in 21:21 be as Zamakhsharī thought it was, the following āya would have been more adequately expressed: "If there were

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(40) Sibawayhī, Al-Kitāb, vol.I, p.461.

(41) Al-Kashshāf, vol.I, p.46.

(42) Ibn al-Munīr, Insāf, margin of al-Kashshāf, vol.3, p.109.

no other than these gods in them (Heaven and Earth) both would have been disordered. The commentator thought the value of the pronoun hum may rather be intended to emphasize the power to resurrect as a necessary quality of God; that the taking of a god in earth entails that it is capable of resurrection.<sup>(43)</sup>

In a third place Zamakhsharī explains that the pronoun does not refer to particularity. He comments briefly that وما هم

بخارجين من النار (2:167) is "similar to the verse:-  
هم يفرشون اللب in so far as the pronoun hum intensifies the situation which has been attributed to them. It is not restrictive.<sup>(44)</sup> The commentator on Zamakhsharī noted that this interpretation is a subtle gesture in support of a Mu'tazilite view concerning the punishment by eternal Hell. Had Zamakhsharī accepted that the pronoun was restrictive as he consistently maintains elsewhere, the commentator argues, then it would have followed that the above mentioned punishment was restricted only to the unbelievers. The latter view is held by the Sunnites as opposed to the Mu'tazilites who claim that the sinners, too, receive such punishment.<sup>(45)</sup> We will see that Zamakhsharī's view is supported by Jurjānī.

Such arguments help to illuminate the importance of subtle stylistic differences. Although they may appear to be strictly of linguistic and artistic value, these matters sometimes serve for doctrinal disputes.

(43) Ibn al-Munīr, Insāf, margin of al-Kashshāf, vol.3, p.109.

(44) Al-Kashshāf, vol.I, p.212.

(45) Ibn al-Munīr, Insāf, margin of ibid.



### The Evocatory Pronoun

One of the familiar emphatic effects of the pronouns in the Qur'ān is that they evoke the attention and in that way attach special importance to what follows. It has been seen that in Arabic grammar, the placing of the noun in front implies that emphasis lies on it and vice versa. Sibawayhī noted that if you say زيد ضربته it is similar to عبدالله منطلق in that you start with 'Abd-Allah in order to draw attention to him, then establish the action. As an example he gave 41:17 (46) أما ثمود فهديناهم Naturally Sibawayhī has not dwelt upon the question of stylistic effect, but Jurjānī carried the argument further and devoted a section to what he called "the secret of corroboration in the prepositiveness of a noun". He first sets the question why: يلبسان المجد the emphatic quality which we find in هما يلبسان المجد is not present. Because, he goes on to answer, when you mention the noun first as in "'Abd Allah ..." you call attention to the person that you want to speak about. When you then say, "stood", or "went out" or "came" you make your meaning clear. In effect, it is readily received by the heart and that, surely, makes it less doubtful, more emphatic and positive."

"In short, the sudden presentation of news is not equal to your stating it after having drawn attention to and introduced it, for that, in so far as it is confirmation and emphasis, is like repetition." (47)

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(46) Sibawayhī, al-Kitāb, vol.I, p.55.

(47) Dalā'il, p.159.

Examples of āyas are given by Jurjānī to illustrate this aspect - some of these are: **فانها لا تعمى الابصار** and **انه لا يفلح الكافرون**. He contrasts the two āyas to the corresponding unemphasized constructions: **فان الابصار لا تعمى** and **ان الكافرين لا يفلحون** respectively. "There is such grandeur such solemnity and such magnificence in **فانها لا تعمى** **الابصار** and similar structures that are entirely absent from their plain alternatives." Jurjānī finds further evidence for his argument in that these āyas show a pattern of being in response to suspicion: When somebody has denied an affair, as in **ويقولون على الله الكذب وهم يعلمون** , or when somebody has falsely claimed to be what he is not, then that is firmly refuted as in **وانا جاءكم قالوا آمنا وقد دخلوا بالكفر** 5:61 **وهم قد خرجوا به** "When they come to you, they say, 'We believe'; but they have entered in unbelief, and so they have departed in it ...". Some people have claimed to be believers but they were not. Jurjānī's view is tenable with regard to the justification which the context provides for emphasis. We are not being told news, i.e., a straightforward fact about some people's behaviour - in which case an alternative sentence like **وقد دخلوا بالكفر وخرجوا به** would have done. As the context is one of a disputed belief, the refutation must be as strong as the claim or even stronger.

#### Evocatory Ambiguity

There is a different type of emphasis which this same device produces. When some affair is intended to sound highly important, when some statement is extremely crucial, such

matters are referred to, initially, in an ambiguous manner by means of a pronoun, then the ambiguity is cleared up, when necessary, by means of an expository sentence. For example, in 15:66 وقضينا اليه ذلك الامر أن دابر هؤلاء مقطوع مصبحين, the matter is first referred to as 'that matter', this serving as an introduction and an evocation of imagination, then the matter is disclosed. It is the horrible news of immediate punishment! Now, look at the translations:

Arberry: "And We decreed for him that commandment, that the last remnant of those should be cut off in the morning."

Pickthall: "And we made plain the case to him, that the root of them (who did wrong) was to be cut at early morn."

Arberry's translation almost conveys the impression of seriousness which colours the text. The secret lies in the single word 'that', or dhālika in the text, for no other word could replace it even though the structure remained the same. Should we, for instance, replace it with 'the' or 'a', the effect of definiteness which 'that' has is greatly reduced. Similarly, in the Arabic text, the omission of dhālika will obviously result in a far less effective statement. Still less effective will be أمرًا in the indefinite state, but the least effective statement may result from the omission of 'amr' altogether.

وقضينا اليه أن دابر هؤلاء مقطوع مصبحين

This is an ideal illustration of the problem of different meaning

versus added effect. Obviously, no change of meaning results from the omission of ذلك الأمر , though the impact on literary effect is remarkable.

Another deviation from the norm in pronouns is where some pronouns in the Qur'ān refer to an obscure thing, which is not explicitly mentioned in the text. The effect is to provoke the imagination and leave the door open for more than one interpretation. The normal rule in Arabic language is that a pronoun should always refer to an explicitly mentioned noun.

In 38:32 فَقَالَ أَنِي أَحَبَبْتُ خَيْرَ الْخَيْرِ عَنْ ذِكْرِ رَبِّي حَتَّى تَوَارَتْ بِالْحِجَابِ there is no such noun and consequently it is not clear to what the reference is in the verb tawārat.

Tabarī interpreted it as 'the sun' and this seems to be commonly accepted. Zamakhsharī, too, accepted this, but he explained that, although there is no explicit reference to the sun, there is an indication that it is meant - i.e., the earlier reference to evening. He does mention, however, another possible interpretation: that the pronoun refers to 'the horses'; these are mentioned in the āya as well as evening.

Now, the full translation of the context of the āya.

Arberry: "And we gave unto David Solomon;  
how excellent a servant he was!

He was a penitent.

When in the evening we presented to him  
the standing steeds,  
he said, 'Lo, I have loved the love of  
good things better than the remembrance  
of my Lord, until the sun was hidden

behind the veil.

Pickthall: "And he said: Lo! I have preferred the good things (of the world) to the remembrance of my Lord; till they were taken out of sight behind the curtain."

Palmer: "and he said, Verily, I have loved the love of good things better than the remembrance of my Lord, until (the sun) was hidden behind the veil, ..."

Whereas Arberry and Palmer have accepted that the pronoun refers to 'the sun', Pickthall has preferred the other interpretation that it refers to the horses.

Before attempting an explanation of this ambiguity, let us examine another example which poses a similar problem, namely, what is referred to in 56:83 فلولا اذا بلغت الحلقوم "Why, then, when it comes up to the throat." Again, reference is being made to the same thing in 56:87 ترجعونها إن كنتم صادقين "Do you not force it back if you are truthful?" without any obvious explicit noun to which the pronouns in ترجعونها and in بلغت could refer. Yet, it has generally been accepted by Qur'ānic interpreters that the reference is here to the soul.<sup>(48)</sup> Translators also did not hesitate to accept that the pronoun is referring to the soul.

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(48) See Tabarī, vol.27, pp.207-210 and Al-Kashshāf, vol.4, p.470.



In the first example, the whole story of Solomon is told in such an allusive way that the implicit far-fetched reference to the sun is not out of context. All the objects are either mentioned in an indefinite state or metaphorically alluded to.

Horses are referred to as المافنات الجيار and again as

الخمر In the following āya there is a controversial clause: فطفق مسحاً بالسوق والأعناق (38:33) and the reason for the controversy is perhaps that the figurative usage is not a commonly known one. It has been interpreted as 'gently touched upon legs and necks' or, in contrast, 'cut off the necks and legs with sword'. An even greater controversy arose over the following āya: وألقينا على كرسيه جسداً (38:34). The reference is probably made to a story which is already known and, naturally, the Qur'ān is intent only on the moral to be drawn from it. Since the context of the story is one of obscure things, unusual events and peculiar beings, the ambiguity which dominates the style is complementary to the general mood.

Similarly in لولا إذا بلغت الحلقوم, the reference there is to the soul; the latter being an ambiguous concept and the air at the death-bed, which is being described in the āya, being extraordinary, it sounds very suitable and harmonious that the soul is referred to as 'hā'. It adds to the contention that men are entirely helpless as regards the holding back of the soul in a patient's body when it is about to pass away. By referring to it as 'hā', the text seems to imply that you (humans) are far from even realizing what 'it' is, let alone forcing 'it' back.

### Tolerated Ambiguity

In general, the use of pronouns in Arabic is remarkably liberal. Although certain rules are generally observed, occasional ambiguities, resulting from pronouns whose references are not definitely fixed, are tolerated if not intended.

Examine the three following examples:

1. وجاهدوا في الله حق جهاده هو اجتباكم و ما جعل عليكم في الدين من حرج .  
ملة أبيكم ابراهيم هو سبطكم المسلمين من قبل وفي هذا

"And strive for Allāh with the endeavour  
which is His right. He hath chosen you  
and hath not laid upon you in religion  
any hardship; the faith of your father  
Abraham. He hath named you Muslims of  
old times and in this ..." (22:78).

To what does the 'huwa' in هو سبطكم refer? To Abraham the  
closest noun, or to Allah as in هو اجتباكم ?

Zamakhsharī: 'the pronoun refers to Allāh and is also said  
to refer to Abraham.'

Tabarī: 'the pronoun refers to Allāh; others said it  
refers to Abraham.'

The sense seems to make it necessary that the pronoun must  
refer to Allāh, nevertheless, some interpreters, as has been  
reported above, chose the other possibility.

2. من كان يريد العزة فلله العزة جميعا اليه يصعد الكلم الطيب  
والعمل الصالح يرفعه والذين يكرهون السيئات لهم عذاب شديد

(35:10)

"Whoso desireth power, all power belongeth  
to Allāh. Unto him (or Him) good words  
ascend, and the pious deed doeth He exalt."

The pronoun in 'yarfa'uhu' might possibly refer: a) to good words. Thus read, the clause means that pious deeds raise good words. b) to pious deeds; thus read it means that good words raise pious deeds. c) to Allāh, as in the translation, Whose name is mentioned earlier in the āya; the meaning, thus, is that: to Him good words ascend and He raises pious deeds. Zamakhsharī refers to all three senses and Tabarī to the first two. (49)

3. أفمن كان على بينة من ربه ويتلوه شاهد منه ومن قبله كتاب  
موسى اماما ورحمة أولئك يؤمنون به ومن يكفر به من الأحزاب  
فالنار موعده فلا تك في مرية منه انه الحق من ربك ولكن اكثر الناس  
لا يؤمنون (11:17)

This is the most ambiguous of all the three examples. Let us examine the possibilities of reference of the numerous pronouns in the āya:

Tabarī:	من كان على بينة	refers to the prophet Muhammad
	ويتلوه شاهد منه	to Muhammad's tongue
or		to Muhammad himself, a
		witness from God.
or		to Alī ibn-Abī-Tālib

(49) See Tabarī, vol.22, p.119.

or

to the angel Gabriel

or

to an unnamed angel.

Tabarī, having related all these interpretations, decided that the best of them is that the shāhid is Gabriel. The remaining pronouns will thus be referring to the Qur'ān.<sup>(50)</sup>

Zamakhsharī:

من كان

Those who believed from the people of the book, like Abd-Allāh ibn-Sallām.

على بينة

The proof from reason.

ويتلوه

Follow "this proof".

شاهد منه

A witness from God, i.e., the Qur'ān.

or alternatively:

ويتلوه

refers to the Qur'ān

شاهد منه

A witness from those people

referred to in من كان على بينة

ومن قبله

refers to the Qur'ān.

في مريم منه

refers to either the Qur'ān

or to the promised

punishment.<sup>(51)</sup>

Arberry: And what of him who stands upon a

(50) Tabarī, vol.12, pp.14-20.

(51) Al-Kashshāf, vol.2, pp.384-5.

clear sign from his Lord, and a witness from  
Him recites it, and before him is the book  
of Moses for an example and a mercy?  
Those believe in it; but whosoever disbelieves  
in it, being one of the partisans, his promised  
Land is the Fire. So be thou not in doubt of  
it; it is the truth from thy Lord, but most  
men do not believe.

Arberry's choice seems to agree with that of Tabarī's. The only  
obvious thing is that the main theme in this āya is the Qur'ān,  
but the shift of reference among the numerous pronouns makes it  
quite ambiguous. It might be reasonable to assume that this  
ambiguity contributes to the solemn air which dominates the āya.  
The subject is also one of religious truth involving Divine  
guidance, some kind of witness and the support of previous  
scriptures. Thus it might be in line with the reverence of the  
message to prefer the indirect to the direct, the implicit to  
the explicit and the subtle allusion rather than the pinpointed-  
legal-style of reference.



Section C

EMPHASIS BY REPETITION

Here, repetition is seen in its wide perspective - appositional phrases, amplification and impletion are treated, as well as ordinary repetition. All these devices are used very often in the Qur'ān, to produce various, but closely related, effects.

a) Ordinary Repetition

This type of repetition is used in the limited structure of the āya, as well as in the context of passages and sūras. In most cases where this device is used, the value of repetition seems to be in stressing a certain idea, impressing the effect of a word or a name, bringing home to the listener the main theme in the subject.

Examine: (7:187)

"They will question thee concerning the hour,  
when it shall berth.

Say: 'the knowledge of it is only  
with my Lord; none shall reveal it  
at its proper time, but He.

Heavy is it in the heavens and the earth;  
it will not come on you but - suddenly!

They will question thee, as though  
thou art well-informed of it.

Say: 'The knowledge of it is only

with God, but most men know not."

In this one āya, the phrase, 'they will question thee', 'yas'alūnaka' is repeated twice, the phrase 'say: the knowledge of it is only' is also repeated twice. It is clear that the repetition of yas'alūnaka is intended to reveal their habit of repeated questioning, which makes Pickthall's 'they ask thee' closer to the Arabic. The repetition of the other phrase قل انما علمها reinforces the one and only one possible answer. It is worth noting that some variation is possible within the repeated phrase. قل انما علمها عند ربي is varied with قل انما Obviously, the result of the repetition is the final feeling that any knowledge of 'the hour' rests with God.

Similarly in 2:144, 'Turn your face' is repeated in the same āya, once addressed to the singular, i.e., the Prophet and again to the plural, i.e., the Muslim nation. Again, the same phrase is repeated in 2:149. Since the question of changing the qibla was not altogether acceptable, the emphasis was enormous on settling it finally and definitely.

Repetition is also used in the context of passionate appeals, as in 40:38-41, where the phrase 'O my people' is repeated to reveal how passionate the man's appeal to his people was. This is made very clear in sūras where God addresses the believers in a gentle way, as if reminding them of who they are and what they stand for. Sūras 8 and 49 exhibit this feature very clearly and very adequately too. In sūra 3, the effect of vocatives as 'rabbana' repeated five times within four āyas, is a passionate and very heartfelt prayer.

An examination of words which are usually repeated within

the āya, shows that these are normally semantic items which constitute some basic concepts crucial to the doctrine of the Qur'ān. Allāh, for instance, is the Name which is repeatedly pronounced even though a pronoun could replace it. For instance, in 2:282 **واتقوا الله و يعلمكم الله ، و الله بكل شيء عليم** the word Allāh could simply be substituted by the pronoun huwa, but the effect would never be the same. Again 2:140 **قل أأنتم أعلم أم الله و من أظلم ممن كتم شهادة عنده من الله وما الله بغافل عما تعملون** the effect of repetition is very strong, but at the same time repetition has another value. It helps to make each of the three phrases capable of standing on its own and, thereby, of being quoted separately for different context. Similarly, in all other examples where the word 'Allāh' is repeated in one and the same āya, the obvious reason is to derive from the Name such effect as the context necessitates. It has been noticed that in sūra 112 **قل هو الله أحد الله الصمد** the effect will greatly be reduced should the second Allāh be replaced by huwa; nor will the effect be the same in 17:105 **وبالحق أنزلناه وبحق نزل** should the pronoun replace **وبالحق**. The grandeur, the beauty and the solemnity will be lost, says Jurjānī.<sup>(52)</sup> Truth is a word which gains special significance in the Qur'ān; it is worthwhile repeating it as in 8:7-8 **ويريد الله أن يحق الحق بكلماته و يقطع دابر الكافرين . ليحق الحق و يبطل الباطل** Although each phrase may have special significance, as Ibn al-Athīr has observed,<sup>(53)</sup> it remains true that the repetition is nevertheless intended. The Meccan sūras, in particular, abound

(52) Dalā'il, p.189.

(53) Burhān, vol.2, p.454.

in such emphatic repetition like: **الحاقة ما الحاقة ولم أدراك**  
**الحاقة** ; similar examples are in 94:5-6, 96:1-5, 97:1-3,  
 101:1-3, 102:2-5. This type of repetition, however, is well  
 known in early Arabic poetry. Examine Muhalhil's verse:

**يا لبكر أنشروا لي كليبيا** **يا لبكر أين أين الفرار**  
 and verses like **قرباً مرتبط النعامة مني** where this clause is  
 repeated at the beginning of each one of three verses.

#### b) Apposition

Emphasis is also gained by apposition, because appositional  
 phrases are usually a form of repetition. Some Arabic scholars  
 noted that some types of apposition are not used for purposes  
 of clarification, but for corroboration and in these cases the  
 appositional phrase is not necessary for the preceding clause  
 (i.e., as regards completion of sense).<sup>(54)</sup> It has also been  
 noted that one of the effects of apposition is that the theme is  
 repeated twice: once in the general sense and another in a  
 more specific sense.<sup>(55)</sup> A classical example of apposition is  
 in 1:6-7 **اهدنا الصراط المستقيم صراط الذين أنعمت عليهم**  
 Zamakhsharī comments: **صراط الذين أنعمت عليهم** is in  
 apposition to **الصراط المستقيم** (examples).

If you ask: 'what use is the apposition?' Why not  
**اهدنا صراط الذين أنعمت عليهم**, I reply: the value is to  
 corroborate, since it contains duality and repetition. It also  
 indicates that the definition of the straight path **الصراط المستقيم**

(54) Burhān, vol.2, p.454.

(55) Ibid., p.455.



is in صراط المسلمين the path of the Muslims. This, in effect, is the most emphatic way of certifying that the path of Muslims is the straight one. It is as if you ask: 'May I tell you who is the most honourable and generous of all men? and then you state his name, 'X'. This is more emphatic in attributing honour and generosity to a person than by saying: "May I tell you about X, the most generous ... etc." That is because, in the first example, you mention the person, generally first and then specifically and you make his name an answer to the highest degree of honour and generosity."

A similar effect can be traced in 42:52-53 وانك لتهدى where the indefinite state precedes and is then defined by annexing the noun to God. Thus arranged the structure gains more effect than would be possible if it were otherwise. Alternatives to this structure are immediately present to the mind:

- I            وانك لتهدى الى صراط الله المستقيم
- or II        وانك لتهدى الى الصراط المستقيم
- or III        وانك لتهدى الى صراط الله .. الذى

The advantages of the Qur'ānic structure over all these alternatives are:

(a) that the straight path is left in the indefinite state, thus evoking the imagination and stimulating it so effectively that, when the answer appears in the appositional phrase, it is far stronger than would otherwise be the case.

(b) In the alternative, the elaboration of adjectives on the name of Allāh would not structurally be possible, for the adjectives would be referring to the path and not to God.

(c) In the third alternative, the adjective 'straight'



has either to be sacrificed altogether or, alternatively, to be delayed to the end; in which case the two āyas which previously read:

وانك لتهدى الى صراط مستقيم صراط الله الذى له ط في  
السموات وط في الأرض ألا الى الله تصير الامم  
وانك لتهدى الى صراط الله الذى له ط في  
السموات وط في الأرض وهو صراط مستقيم

This structure not only replaces a vigorous pausal phrase with a weak one, but takes out all the vigour from the statement and creates a feeling of disappointment and almost absurdity.

Examine, in the same connection, the āya: 12:20 وشروه  
بثمان بخس دراهم معدودة وكنوا فيه من الزاهدين  
It is clear that the two phrases دراهم and بثمان بخس  
substitute one another, without really changing the meaning.  
However, the effect is different. If any of the two phrases  
is omitted, the emphatic effect of the semi-repetitive  
structure will be lost. If, on the other hand, the second  
phrase came first وشروه بدراهم معدودة ثمن بخس the result  
is a very dull statement. The reason seems to be that, whereas  
in the Qur'ānic structure the second phrase is an elaboration  
on the first, in the alternative structure it is a kind of  
comment - and since the precise price has been stated, the  
comment is redundant.

A slightly different example of apposition is in 2:217  
يسألونك عن الشهر الحرام قتال فيه It is a different type  
of apposition in that the second phrase is not exactly equal in  
meaning to the first. In other words, none of the two phrases  
can be omitted without considerable change of meaning. It is  
possible, however, to rephrase the sentence in such a way that

the meaning is retained, but the effect is necessarily different. The alternative phrasing will be يسألونك عن ( القتال ) في الشهر but the difference is obviously a shift of emphasis from the sacred month, as a theme, to the precise question of fighting during the month. The Qur'ānic structure deliberately indicates that the questioning was about the more general problem of the sanctity of the month, triggered by the question of fighting. It is as if the fighting which had taken place within the sacred month, made some people wonder whether the sanctity of certain months will be recognized by Islam. In support of this understanding of the structure, we find that in the same āya, the construction is deliberately given a twist, so that the Sacred Mosque is thus mentioned as if to balance the Sacred Month. Examine

يسألونك عن الشهر الحرام قتال فيه قل قتال فيه كبير وصد  
عن سبيل الله و كفر به والمسجد الحرام و اخراج اهله منه أكبر عند  
الله و الفتنة أكبر من القتل

When a certain name or noun is intended to be highlighted in the Qur'ān, the usual practice is to make it the theme of the sentence. Thus, الشهر الحرام is being highlighted by placing it in the structure where pronouns refer to it as they also do to المسجد الحرام .

With this in mind, it seems that Arberry's translation is closer to conveying the implication than Pickthall's.

Arberry: "They will question thee concerning  
the holy month, and fighting in it.

Say: 'Fighting in it is a heinous thing,  
but to bar from God's way, and disbelief in Him,

and the Holy Mosque, and to expel its people from it - that is more heinous in God's sight."

Pickthall: "They question thee (O Muhammad) with regard to warfare in the sacred month. Say: Warfare therein is a great (transgression) but to turn men from the way of Allāh, and to disbelieve in Him and in the inviolate Place of Worship, and to expel His people thence, is greater with Allāh."

c) Amplification

It is a very common feature in the Qur'ān that meaning is strengthened by a kind of elaboration which in English would be called amplification. In Arabic, however, the use of (tarāduf or takrīr) is controversial. Some scholars hold that, whenever similar adjectives are coupled, there must be some subtle differences between them; otherwise, the practice (like tautology in English) is not an advisable literary device.<sup>(56)</sup>

It might be the case that the semantic spheres of certain Arabic words overlap; in such cases the meaning is not made perfectly clear unless all the words that contribute to the semantic field are assembled. It is difficult to assume, for instance, that the words: استكانوا ، ضعفوا ، وهنوا are exactly synonyms, however difficult it may seem to point out the distinction between them. Thus, in 3:146 فها وهنوا

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(56) Burhān, vol.2, p.454.

لما أصابهم في سبيل الله وما ضعفوا وما استكانوا ..

the total meaning is that of absolute strength, steadfastness and resolve on behalf of the people described. Translations may help illuminate this aspect:

Arberry: "Many a prophet there has been, with whom thousands manifold have fought, and they fainted not for what smote them in God's way, neither weakened, nor did they humble themselves, and God loves the patient."

Pickthall: "They quailed not for aught that befell them in the way of Allāh, nor did they weaken nor were they brought low. Allāh loveth the steadfast."

Again in 20:112 فلا يخاف ظلما ولا هضما though the two words zulm and hadm are similar in meaning, there is considerable semantic difference between them. Tabarī interprets zulm as the infliction of punishment on a person for a crime somebody else committed, whereas hadm is the unequal reward for good work.<sup>(57)</sup> Zamakhsharī, also, noted some difference: "zulm is when somebody takes from another more than is his right, but hadm is to give less to somebody than he deserves."<sup>(58)</sup>

As Tabarī noted, the item hadm is associated with loss (naqs).

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(57) Tabarī, vol.16, p.217.

(58) Al-Kashshāf, vol.3, p.89.

We speak of a woman's bosom being hadīm, i.e., slim, and of food being hudima or digested, i.e., reduced to a different matter.

Arberry: "shall fear neither wrong nor injustice"

Pickthall: "he feareth not injustice nor begrudging (of his wage)".

Other examples are:

20:77	لا تخاف دركا ولا تخشى
12:86	انما أشكو بثي وحزني الى الله
20:107	لا ترى فيها عوجا ولا أمّتا
43:80	أم يحسبون أنا لا نسمع سرهم ونجواهم

Zamakhsharī does not refer to the possibility of difference in meaning between takhāf and takhshā in 20:77. Tabarī makes the first refer to the fear from the Pharaoh and the second to the fear from drowning. He also draws a distinction between 'iwaḥ and amt in 20:107. amt, according to him, is the kind of fold which you get in a water-skin when it is not completely full; 'iwaḥ, on the other hand, has to do with deviation and contour.

Zamakhsharī draws the distinction between bathth and huzn for he explains that bathth is the utmost degree of huzn (12:86). As for sirr and najwā (43:80) the difference, according to him, is: "sirr is what a person says either to himself or to another in a desolate place; najwā is what they (people) whisper among



themselves."

Let us, now, examine how Arberry translated each of the previous examples.

20:77 لا تخاف دركا ولا تخشى      fearing not overtaking,  
neither afraid.

12:86 انما اشكو بشي وحزني الى الله      I make complaint of my anguish  
and my sorrow unto God

20:107 لا ترى فيها عوجا ولا أمتا      wherein thou wilt see no  
crookedness neither any  
curving

43:80 أم يحسبون أنا لا نسمع سرهم      Or do they think We hear not  
و نجواهم      their secret and what they  
conspire together?

In all the previous and similar examples, there seems to be some difference between the two synonyms. The difference may be one of degree or of special association, but the effect of such similar words when they are brought together is that they stress and support each other.

There is a slightly different type of amplification and that is where the word or phrase which is being amplified is implicit or inclusive of its amplifier. To make this clear, let us examine 2:238 حافظوا على الصلوات والصلاة الوسطى      'Be guardians of your prayers  
وقوموا لله قانتين      and of the midmost prayer.' Here the midmost prayer is

necessarily part of prayers. The specification of one prayer is understood to add special importance to it. Also in 3:104, "And there may spring from you a nation who invite to goodness, and enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency". Forbidding indecency is sometimes thought to be part of enjoining right and both are part of inviting to goodness. Further examples are to be found in 9:78: "Know they not that Allāh Knoweth both their secret and the thought that they confide, and that Allāh is the Knower of Things Hidden?"

Here the general concept is referred to after the specific one; in other words, the amplifier is inclusive of what it amplifies. So in 15:87 ولقد آتيناك سبعا من المثاني "We have given thee seven of the oft-repeated (verses) and the great Qur'ān."

It may seem logical that, in all the previous examples, some part of the structure could be cut off without any obvious loss in sense. Yet, as far as emphasis is concerned, none of these structures would be as strong and emphatic as they now are if it were restricted only to the words which are grammatically necessary to form complete sense.

#### d) Impletion

Impletion is treated, here, as a type of repetition because, in structures which contain impletion, the sense is not made any clearer by the extra words or phrases - these only serve to stress the fact or the image which is already established. For example in 6:38 يطير ولا طائر يطير بجناحيه the phrase يطير بجناحيه may seem to be needless since it is understood that any

flying bird, naturally, flies with wings. Explanations for the reason for this phrase are numerous. Some scholars thought the phrase helped to render the statement categorical, that is, that every bird, real bird, is meant, thus removing any possibility that the reference to a bird may be metaphorical. Others, including Zamakhsharī, noted that the phrase makes the statement more comprehensive, since it refers to the act of flying, whatever creature performed it.<sup>(59)</sup> The act of speaking or saying something is occasionally emphasized in the Qur'ān by further describing the action as being done with the tongue.

Examine:

24:15 از تلقونه بالسنتكم وتقولون بأفواهكم ما ليس لكم به علم

and

48:11 يقولون بالسنتهم ما ليس في قلوبهم

'Speaking with the mouth or tongue' is a very similar expression to 'flying with the wings'; both are emphatic in so far as they tend to illustrate the implicit, making it very literal and categorical. Another possibility, though somewhat far-fetched, is that which Zamakhsharī adopted. He explained تقولون in 24:15 as an indication that in this particular case - unlike normal speech - what they said did not correspond to any knowledge.<sup>(60)</sup> He quoted 3:167 يقولون بأفواههم ما ليس في قلوبهم in support of this view. Another āya which may support Zamakhsharī's view, but he did not quote, is 33:4

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(59) Burhān, vol.2, pp.425-6.

(60) The āya here refers to rumour circulated about 'Ā'isha.

And see al-Kashshāf, vol.3, p.219.

بأفواهكم ذلكم قولكم where the context does not necessitate any emphasis on the fact that they said these things, for it was a well-known convention to make such statements. What was necessary to be emphasized, however, was that what they said was baseless; words unsubstantiated by any facts in reality. Look at the translations:

Arberry: "Neither has He made your adopted sons your sons in fact. That is your own saying, the words of your mouths; but God speaks the truth, and guides on the way."

Pickthall: "Nor hath he made those whom ye claim (to be your sons) your sons. This is but a saying of your mouths."

It seems that Pickthall catches the implication of the āya in so far as it contrasts what they merely say with what is true and factual. However, even if this view holds here, it cannot be generalized to cover the other āyas in the category. As has been seen in يطير بجناحيه the emphatic value is clearly intended.

Some other examples, which are slightly variant from those examined above, are: فصيام ثلاثة أيام في الحج وسبعة (2:196). إذا رجعت تلك عشرة كاملة

Clearly, what is intended here is the elimination of all possible ambiguity so that the number of days is definitely stated. In that way it resembles 7:142: وواعدنا موسى ثلاثين ليلة وأتممناها بعشر فتم ميقات ربه أربعين ليلة

This type of emphatic structure is indeed quite common, even in modern style, and is used for the purposes of legal register, as every detail has to be made absolutely clear.

On the other hand, there are certain phrases which are sometimes called necessary adjectives (sifa lāzima), i.e., adjectives or adjectival phrases which do not really add any quality to the noun which they describe, but merely single out a quality or qualities which belong to the noun by definition. By being pointed at and treated as though they were adjectives, these phrases focus the attention on a certain quality which is to be emphasized. For example, in 23:117 **وَمَنْ يَدْعُ مَعَ اللَّهِ** **لَا بَرَهَانَ لَهُ** the phrase **لَا بَرَهَانَ لَهُ** may seem to imply that it is possible to call upon another god whom one may have proof of. In fact, the phrase only emphasizes that whenever one calls upon another god apart from the One God, one is short of proof. To avoid the wrong implication, perhaps, Pickthall adopted an interpretation which appears to be less plausible:

"He who crieth unto any other god along  
with Allāh hath no proof thereof. His  
reckoning is only with his Lord."

The text does not seem to allow the break of structure which the full stop causes. Arberry's translation is closer to the Arabic:

"And whosoever calls upon another god  
with God, whereof he has no proof, his



reckoning is with his Lord."

Tabarī's interpretation seems to support Pickthall's reading but Zamakhsharī's view is different. He treats the phrase as an adjectival phrase rather than an apodosis. He correctly compares this phrase to another one: **لَمْ يَنْزِلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا** which occurs in 3:151, 6:81, 7:33 and 22:71.<sup>(61)</sup> These examples support Zamakhsharī's reading because they establish a pattern of structure in relation with gods who are claimed to exist besides God (for whom He hath given no warrant). Further examples will be found in 2:61 **وَيَقْتُلُونَ النَّبِيِّنَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ** It may be assumed that the slaying of prophets can never be rightful, yet the structure of the āya prefers to state explicitly that they did it 'unrightfully'.

Such structures have been given various labels in Arabic rhetoric and were the subject of controversy. It is treated under the title of itnāb by 'Askarī,<sup>(62)</sup> and Ibn al-Athīr<sup>(63)</sup> but described as ishbā' by Qazwīnī.<sup>(64)</sup> 'Askarī contrasted this type with ījāz (brevity) but his view was challenged by Ibn al-Athīr who thought the ultimate purpose of speech is to make meaning lucid and plain; if this could be achieved concisely there is no use or reason for extensive wording. According to 'Askarī, prolongation is similar to following a long road due to ignorance of a short road, i.e., ījāz, whereas

(61) Al-Kashshāf, vol.3, p.206.

(62) As-Sinā'atayn, pp.190-5.

(63) Al-Jāmi' al-Kabīr, pp.150-1.

(64) As-Sahībī, pp.272-3.

impletion (itnāb) is similar to following a long road for the sake of pleasure and other profits which exist along the road. This simile was accepted by Ibn al-Athīr, but he illustrated it with language which in itself may serve as an example of itnāb versus ījāz.

Section D

EMPHASIS THROUGH VARIATION

Variation is a very striking feature of many of the structures in the Qur'ān. Although the reasons for varying the style are not usually attributable to one single effect, in most cases it is possible to discern an element of emphasis where the variation is a kind of inversion. But even in such cases, emphasis does not seem to be the only reason for the variation.

As far as style in general is concerned, Arab critics have generally rejected the idea of deviations made at the cost of meaning in order to achieve variation or any other formal feature. With regard to the Qur'ān in particular, such deviations do not seem to exist; nor is there any tendency to produce a kind of decorated style. Nevertheless, some types of variation in the Qur'ān have been accounted for as being a means of avoiding repetition.<sup>(65)</sup> In such cases, however, no alteration of meaning occurs but a twist from one person or from one tense to another.

(a) Variation of Persons

The most common type of variation in the Qur'ān is the twist in address from one person to another, usually described in Arabic rhetoric as iltifāt. One classic example of this

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(65) See following quotation from Zamakhsharī below.

(Footnote 67).

figure is in the verses by imru'u l-Qays. (66)

ونام الخلي ولم ترقد	تطاول ليك بالاثمد
كليلة نى العائر الارمد	وبات و باتت له ليلة
وخبرته عن ابي الاسود	و ذلك من نبيء جاني

The Qur'ān abounds in such devices, the most famous of which are the ones in Sūra I. There, God is referred to in the third person at the beginning of the sūra but, with a sudden twist at the middle, He is addressed directly. This twist has been explained as a device intended to vary the style and thus evoke greater attention in the listener. At the same time, the device achieves other purposes. It helps to stress the idea that only God is addressed with service, obedience and prayer for help, because of those attributes which He possesses and which are described before He is directly addressed. (67) It is clear, then, that there may be some other reasons for changing the person besides variation. The previous example, however, is a change of address within a short sūra, but there are examples of such a change within one āya.

In 4:64, for example, the second person is suddenly treated as a third person. ولوأنهم ان ظلموا أنفسهم جاءوك فاستغفروا الله واستغفر لهم الرسول لوجدوا الله توابا رحيمًا  
 The phrase wa staghfara lahum<sup>u</sup> r-rasūl could be substituted by wa staghfarta lahum, but obviously the reference to the 'apostle' by title is intended to imply how likely it would be for them to gain God's forgiveness if 'the apostle' prayed for

(66) Al-Kashshāf, vol.I, p.14.

(67) Al-Kashshāf, on 1:4, vol.I, p.12.

them. A similar example may be found in 7:158 **قل يا أيها الناس اني رسول الله اليكم جميعا الذى له ملك السموات والارض .... فآمنوا بالله ورسوله النبي الامي الذى يؤمن بالله وكلماته واتبعوه لعلكم تهتدون .** Why not 'believe in God and me' rather than 'God and His apostle'? There seem to be two reasons for this twist of structure. One reason is the emphasis gained by explicit reference to the apostle, for that defines the capacity in which he calls upon people to believe in His message. The second reason is that, by shifting the reference to the third person it has been made easy to describe him by the various adjectives which qualify the noun phrase 'his apostle' in the āya.

Conversely, the shift may be made from the third person to the first, as in 20:53 **الذى جعل لكم الارض مهذا وسلك لكم فيها سبيلا وأنزل من السماء ماء فأخرجنا به أزواجا من نبات شتى .** The verbs ja'ala, salaka and anzala create a pattern which is suddenly broken by akhrajnā. Here, Zamakhsharī explains that it is a way of specifying God with this act, so that nobody else could be conceived of as capable of achieving the process of bringing forth 'the diverse kinds of vegetation'.<sup>(68)</sup> It is interesting that in other places where the sequence develops from the sending down of water to the bringing forth of vegetation, the same feature occurs of shifting from the third person to the first. It is as if this aspect in particular is being stressed by associating it with God speaking in the first person. Examples of such usages are in 6:99, 27:60, 35:27.

It has been seen that some of the expressions in the Qur'ān

(68) Al-Kashshaf, vol.3, p.68.



are presented in a theatrical form. This is also the reason for certain transitions from one person to the other. In 8:13-14

ذلك بأنهم شاقوا الله ورسوله ومن يشاقق الله ورسوله فان الله شديد العقاب | ذلكم فذوقوه وان للكافرين عذاب النار  
the person turns suddenly from the third person in 13 to the second in 14, so that the people about whom a statement is being made are no longer absent. They suddenly appear to be immediately present and directly addressed with a very threatening remark. Ironically, the sequence shifts again making a general statement about the fate of 'the disbelievers', thus making it clear that they have appeared only to be faced with that threatening remark and, then, they are immediately dismissed. Again in 10:22 هو الذى يسيركم فى البر والبحر حتى اذا كنتم فى الفلك وجرين بهم بريح طيبة وفرحوا بها جاءتها ريح عاصف وجاءهم الموج من كل مكان وظنوا أنهم أحيط بهم دعوا الله مخلصين له الدين لئن أنجيتنا من هذه .....  
the āya is started with a direct address to mankind in the second person but then an image emerges and henceforward the sequence moves to the image of the people in the ship, referred to in the third person.

(b) Variation of Number in Pronouns

The second type of variation is that of number in pronouns. This relates to a feature, discussed earlier, namely that the Qur'ānic structure sometimes varies number to achieve some stylistic effect by a turn or a shift in the structure. A singular pronoun, for instance, may be later echoed in the plural pronoun, and vice versa. Examine 2:112

بلى من أسلم وجهه لله وهو محسن فله أجره عند ربه

ولا خوف عليهم ولا هم يحزنون

'Nay, but whosoever surrendereth his  
purpose to Allah while doing good, his  
reward is with his Lord; and there shall  
no fear come upon them neither shall  
they grieve.'

Here the meaning is obvious. Initially, the reference is made to every single person stressing the comprehensiveness of the rule, but, towards the end of the āya, the pronouns refer to the plural, making it clear that a category of people is now conceived. This type of structure is very common in the Qur'ān, particularly with the relative pronoun, man, which often in the Qur'ān takes the singular verbal form, although grammatically it is capable of being a plural as well as a singular pronoun. (69)

It seems that in most cases where the pronouns are varied there is some deliberate reference to some person or persons intended to be included in the statement. For example in 10:78

قَالُوا أَجِئْنَا لَتُلْفِتَنَّا عَمَّا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا وَتَكُونَ لَكُمُ الْكِبْرِيَاءُ  
فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا نَحْنُ لَكُمَا بِمُؤْمِنِينَ .

"They said: Hast thou come to us to pervert  
us from that (faith) in which we found our  
fathers, and that you two may own the place  
of greatness in the land? We will not  
believe you two."

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(69) See for example al-Mufasssal, p.146.

Moses is first addressed in the singular as if to imply that he alone claimed prophethood but then when it came to his intentions they referred to the two of them implying that he (Moses) wanted worldly benefits for both of them (Moses and Aaron).

يا أيها النبي إذا طلقتم النساء فطلقوهن.. 65:1

"O Prophet! When ye (men) put away women, put them ..." then, later on, in this āya لا تدري "thou knowest not ..."

Obviously the prophet is addressed on behalf of his community and this fact is illustrated by the pronouns referring to the plural. Agreement is not the paramount concern in the structure, meaning is; and meaning is indicated in the shortest and most direct way.

Āya 10:87

وأوحينا إلى موسى وأخيه أن تبوءا لقومكما بمصر بيوتا واجعلوا بيوتكم قبلة وأقيموا الصلاة وبشر المؤمنين.

"And We inspired Moses and his brother, (saying): Appoint [dual] houses for your [dual] people in Egypt and make [plural] your [plural] houses oratories, and establish [plural] worship. And give [singular] good news to the believers."

Zarkashī notes that both Moses and his brother are addressed in the first command; the second and the third are meant for the whole community and hence the plural pronouns. Then, later, Moses is addressed in the singular with a command which he, alone, as the actual apostle, may execute.<sup>(70)</sup>

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(70) Burhān, vol.3, p.335.

(c) Variation of Tenses (Prolepsis)

In this type of structure, future events are expressed in terms of past tenses or, conversely, events of the past may be expressed in the present tense. The latter type is less common in Arabic literature and is probably used not so much to emphasize the action but to dramatize it. A classic example from pre-Islamic verse is:

فاني قد لقيت الغول تهوى      بسهب كالصحيفة صححان  
فأضرها بلا دهن فخرت      صريعا للدين وللجران

The verbs are all in the past tense except for adribu which is expressed in the present tense in order to create an image of how the action was actually carried out.<sup>(71)</sup> In the same manner, we find that the verb, tuthīr, in āya 35:9 والله الذي أرسل الرياح فتثير سحابا فسقاه الى بلد ميت فأحيينا به الأرض... does not agree with the tense pattern of arsala, suqā and ahyaynā. Translations do not retain the tense-form of the original. The structure might all conceivably be in the present tense or, otherwise, tuthīr could be changed into athārat so that it agrees with the other verbs. However, the present form of the āya appeals to the sense of familiarity with which a description of the gathering cloud is received by those who have seen it time and time again. By putting the verb in the past tense one is reminded of how often one has seen this happen before. It is quite significant that the acts which are directly attributed to God are emphatically expressed in the

(71) Al-Kashshāf, vol.3, p.601.

past tense in a manner reinforcing the suggestion that everybody has frequently seen this being done by God. Conversely, the single act which has been attributed to the winds is expressed in the present tense, probably because the idea of wind stirring clouds need not be highlighted by means of relating it to former experience.

The same pattern of expression is evident in 22:63

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَتَصْبِغُ الْأَرْضَ مُخْضَرَّةً

"Hast thou not seen how that God has  
sent down out of heaven water, and in  
the morning the earth becomes green?"

There is an interesting contrast between 42:2 and 42:7.

The former is كَذَلِكَ يُوحِي إِلَيْكَ وَإِلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ اللَّهُ

"So reveals to thee and to those before thee God". The latter goes  
وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا . .

"And so We have revealed to thee an Arabic Qur'an." The interesting contrast is in the fact that whereas the āya which refers to the inspiration of former messengers expresses the fact in the present tense, the other āya which only refers to Muhammad expresses it as if it were a past event. The contrast emphasizes each event in a different way. There seems to be the suggestion that it has happened before, just as it is happening now or that it is happening now just as it has happened before. Zamakhsharī, however, comments on the first one and explains that the tense form implies that it is a practice of God to reveal such matters as are found in this



particular sūra. (72)

(d) The other type of prolepsis, which is also the more common one, is the expression of future events in the past tense so that it appears as if they have already taken place. Most descriptions of the end of time, the Day of Judgement and similar events are presented in the past tense. In 16:1 **وَنفِخُ فِي الصُّورِ فَجَمَعْنَاهُمْ جَمْعًا** the translators could not convey the element of emphasis which is associated with the use of the past tense. Again in 18:99 **وَيَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ فَفَزِعَ مِنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ** the blowing of the trumpet and the gathering of mankind is expressed in terms of the past in order to emphasize it. Similarly, in 27:87, **وَمِنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ . . .** the same pattern holds. It seems quite understandable that the use of such emphatic structures is associated with events which call for emphasis like the blowing of the trumpet and the end of life - news which has normally been received cynically. Thus we notice that the pattern of expression is remarkably emphatic in all āyas which bring forth this exciting news. (73) Ibn-al-Athīr seems to have noticed this pattern, as he declares that the reason for the expression of a future event in terms of the past tense is normally to describe one of those enormous awesome events which have not (yet) taken place. In the opposite case of expressing the past in terms of the present, the intention is to represent the event, so that it

(72) Al-Kashshāf, vol.4, p.208.

(73) Further examples are to be found in 21:1; 50:20-21; 39:68-75 and 2:210.

appears to be taking place right now before our eyes. (74)

Thus it can be seen that where variation occurs in the Qur'ān, it is usually employed as a device to achieve an emphasis which draws closer attention to meaning or involves a more vivid picture.

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(74) Al-Jāmi', p.104.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCISE STRUCTURES

Traditionally, ījāz is regarded as a high quality of style. Most Arab rhetoricians include it as a chapter among the different types of balāgha. Although no single definition of ījāz is agreed on, it might be assumed that conciseness and brevity are both meant. There are two types of ījāz: hādhf and qisār; the latter probably applies to all concise structures which, for semantic reasons, cover a range of meaning that one would not normally expect to be encompassed by such small structures. In that way ījāz comes close to some types of ambiguity, as will be seen later. Hādhf, (elision), however, is regarded as a different type of brevity, because it is the elimination of pleonasm. Thus, the difference between the two types of conciseness is probably that whereas one is achieved by reducing the number of words to the least required by meaning, the other is achieved by the use and phrasing of words so that their sense stretches over a wide range of meaning. Ambiguity, rich imagery and similar devices of rhetoric, all contribute to the latter effect. This is perhaps what 'Askarī means by 'few words but many meanings'.<sup>(1)</sup> Examples given to illustrate this type of ījāz are pregnant comprehensive statements like:

2:179 ولكم في القصص حياة ; these will be discussed later, and the distinction between them and the other elliptic structures will be brought out by looking into the nature of the latter.

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(1) As-sinā'atayn, p.175.

### Ellipsis

Under the term hadhf, Arabic grammarians as early as Ibn Jinnī (died 392/1001-1002) and even Ibn Qutayba (died 276/889) dealt with various types of elliptical structures. Their approach was mainly grammatical, particularly Ibn-Jinnī who classified the omitted words according to their grammatical function and listed about six types of elision. His concern was not mainly with the Qur'ān, but with poetry which he quoted heavily and only sometimes did he support his views with Qur'ānic usages. Among these are the following:

1. The elision of the subject as in 46:35

كَانَهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرُونَ مَا يُوْعَدُونَ لَمْ يَلْبَثُوا إِلَّا سَاعَةً مِنْ نَهَارٍ .  
بَلَاغٌ فَهَلْ يُهْلِكُ إِلَّا الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقُونَ .

'(it will seem to them) as though they had tarried but an hour of daylight. A clear message. Shall any be destroyed save evil-living folk?' He comments that balāgh is the predicate of an omitted subject which may be dhālika or hādha.

2. The elision of the predicate as in 47:21 طاعةٌ وقولٌ

مَعْرُوفٌ فَلَوْ صدَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَكُنْ خَيْرًا لِهِمْ .

this he thinks may be read either as طاعة (أمرنا) or طاعة معروف . Ibn-Jinnī's view here is supported by both Tabarī's and Zamakhsharī's interpretation. It is, therefore, difficult to accept Arberry's liberty with the translation of the two āyas; he chooses to interpret the last phrase in the preceding āya فأولى لهم as 'better for them', thus solving the problem of the missing predicate or subject

by assuming that there is enjambment between the two āyas. The Arabic text is:

ويقول الذين آمنوا لولا نزلت سورةً فإذا أنزلت سورة محكمة  
 وذكر فيها القتال رأيت الدين في قلوبهم مرض ينظرون  
 اليك نظر الفقي عليه من الموت فأولى لهم  
 طاعة وقول معروف فإذا عزم الأمر فلو صدقوا الله  
 لكان خيرا لهم .

Arberry: "Those who believe say, 'Why has a  
 sūra not been sent down? Then when a clear sūra  
 is sent down, and therein fighting is mentioned,  
 thou seest those in whose hearts is sickness  
 looking at thee as one who swoons of death;  
but better for them would be obedience and words  
 honourable'.

Arberry's rendering is similar to that of Ali and Palmer; they all depart from the accepted understanding of the verse among Arab interpreters.

On the other hand, Pickthall follows the traditional division of the text and the accepted interpretation of the phrase, but the result is more unfamiliar in English than it is in Arabic. "... Therefore woe unto them! Obedience and a civil word. Then ..." The question which might be asked about this English translation is: what about obedience and a civil word? The same question is possible about the Arabic and hence the different views on what should be supplied to complete the sense. Yet, in Arabic it sounds like an all too common, perhaps even popular, peculiarity.

It might be assumed that Ibn-Jinnī's quest for complete



sense is to be expected from a grammarian to whom language must always fall in recognized forms. Grammar aside, this and similar phrases could be understood as rhetorical exclamations which need not conform to formal division of subject and predicate.

3. The elision of the (mudāf) annexed noun as in 2:189 **ولكن البرّ** من اتقى, literally this is 'but piety is he who fears God'.

Meaning:

Arberry: 'but piety is to be God-fearing.'

Pickthall: 'but the righteous man is he who wardeth off evil.'

Ibn-Jinnī assumes it might be read **ولكن البرّ برّ من اتقى** or **ولكنّ (ذا) البرّ من اتقى**.

The structural problem which Ibn-Jinnī is trying to solve is the need for agreement. However, the grammarian's fussiness for agreement does not seem to have bothered the bedouin poet as the countless examples of deviation, quoted by the grammarians themselves, illustrate. The liberties of the Qur'ān are even greater. As far as the stylist is concerned, a clause like **ولكنّ البرّ من اتقى** only illustrates such liberties. This Elliptic style is manifest also in relating different items by conjunction as in the controversial 5:60 **وجعل منهم القرود** "Allāh hath turned some to apes and swine and who serveth idols." Ibn-Jinnī is almost being pedantic when he quotes among his examples of elision 12:82 **واسأل أهل القرية التي كما فيها**, where he feels the need to point out that **أهل** is assumed before **القرية**. It is amusing to notice that such a metaphorical phrase, too obvious to need to be pointed out,

should be echoed, ever since Ibn-Jinnī, by grammarians and rhetoricians alike.<sup>(2)</sup>

However, Ibn-Jinnī set a clear and useful rule for elision:

"The Arabs omit the clause, the word, the letter and the vowel, only when there is something (in the text) to indicate it. Otherwise (omission) would be like demanding the knowledge of the unknown, ghayb."<sup>(3)</sup>

Although his treatment of the matter is totally grammatical, the manner in which he classified it indicates how aware he was of the stylistic side to the question. Ellipsis is classified among other things which Ibn-Jinnī thought to be a peculiar feature of the Arabic language; he called this feature 'the courage of Arabic', 'Shajā'at al-'Arabiyya'.<sup>(4)</sup> The term, though it might not be scientific, is very descriptive of the way in which leaps are made, inversions committed and many notions assumed which the mind has to supply.

Ibn-Jinnī may be assumed to have elaborated on the pattern set earlier by Sibawayhī. The latter indicated that the phrase 2:135 بَلْ مَلَكًا بَرَّاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا is to be understood by supplying the word تَقَبَّلَ.<sup>(5)</sup> The bracket supplied in

(2) See: J. Wansbrough, Qur'anic Studies, p.227.

(3) Al-Khasā'is, vol.2, p.360.

(4) Ibid., vol.2, p.360.

(5) Sibawayhī, Al-Kitāb, vol.I, p.154.

translation gives the same sense: 'Nay, but (we follow) the religion of Abraham the upright.'

Ibn Qutayba, less of a grammarian, treated the problem of Ellipsis in his Ta'wīl Mushkil al-Qur'ān and though not quite free from the frame of mind set by grammarians, he was less technical and seemed to see more of the literary side of the problem. He preceded Ibn-Jinnī, but was more elaborate in quoting examples, probably because his main concern was with the Qur'ān. However, he too was content with pointing out the structures that posed a problem and supplying the word or phrase in order to complete the sense or solve the problem of agreement. For example, he discussed 10:71 فَأَجْمِعُوا أَمْرَكُمْ Literally: 'So resolve your affair and your associates,' where the imperative ajmi' clearly governs amr but not shurakā'. He assumes the elision of an imperative وَأَعْمُوا before shurakā'ukum. What is more interesting is his examples of similar liberties in poetry, like ورأيت زوجك في الوغى مستقدا سيفا The participle مستقدا only normally applies to sword but the poet has extended its use to spears. Similarly, the search for agreement between the verb and the objective phrase drove him to assume an omitted verb in 17:23 وقضى ربك ألا تعبدوا and that is ووصى just before بالوالدين احسانا. 'Thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none save Him and ( . . . ? )kindness to parents.'

Nowhere is this attitude of reducing a vivid utterance into a lifeless grammatical structure more evident than in Ibn Qutayba's comment on 2:93 واشربوا في قلوبهم العجل 'and they were made to drink the calf in their hearts', where he simply points out that the word hubb must be assumed before al-'ijl. In fact

this hardly brings out the sense of the āya, which is necessarily metaphorical. If the heart cannot be conceived to drink the calf, it is equally difficult to conceive it drinking the love of the calf. The expression is probably meant to emphasize the extent to which their fancy for the calf had overwhelmed them. The figurative expression shows the calf to have run into their veins and become part and parcel of their hearts.

### Theatrical Structures

Ibn Qutayba gives a different example of ellipsis which seems to fall into another category of Qur'ānic style, namely the theatrical expression. The āya 3:106 وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ اسْوَدَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ "As for those whose faces are blackened - did you disbelieve....?" shows a shift of structure which Ibn Qutayba filled in by assuming فَيَقَالُ لَهُمْ . Seen in proper context this type of phrase would be found very common in the Qur'ān. Quotations are sometimes not introduced by words like 'said', 'asked' or 'shouted'; the words abruptly come forward in a manner reminiscent of the theatre where a story is not told but replayed and one's words are not related but one is presented as saying them. Similar structures are in 3:7-8 وَمَا يَذْكُرُ إِلَّا أَهْلَ الْاَلْبَابِ | رَبَّنَا لَا تُزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا ... "but only men of understanding really heed. Our Lord! cause not our hearts to stray after Thou hast guided us."

الذين ظلّموا هل هذا الا بشئ مما كنتم  
and 21:3

Literally: "The evil-doers - Is this aught but a mortal like to yourselves?" Again in 32:12 وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ اِذِ الْمُرْسَلُونَ تَأْكُلُ رُءُوسَهُمْ

Literally: "Couldst thou but see when the

guilty hang their heads before their Lord, - Our Lord! we have now seen ..." such a word as 'saying' always being assumed.<sup>(6)</sup>

### Allusions

In some of the structures of the Qur'ān, allusion is made to the idea but the complete sense is not explicitly expressed. Such structures are more common in oaths and some conditionals like law, as in 13:31 ولو أن قرآنا سُيِّرَتْ بِهِ الْجِبَالُ .. "Had it been possible for a recitation to cause the mountains to move or the earth to be torn asunder", where the apodosis introduced by law is only to be understood.<sup>(7)</sup> Similarly, in 39:9 أَمَّنْ هُوَ قَانَتْ آثَاءُ اللَّيْلِ سَاجِدًا وَ قَائِمًا يَعِذُّرَ الْآخِرَةَ وَ يَرْجُو رَحْمَةَ رَبِّهِ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ. The structure is loose-ended as is clear in Arberry's translation:

'Or is he who is obedient in the watches  
of the night, bowing himself and standing,  
he being afraid of the world to come  
and hoping for the mercy of his Lord...?  
Say: 'Are they equal - those who know and  
those who know not?'

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- (6) For the previous quotations see Ibn Qutayba, Ta'wīl Mushkil al-Qur'ān, pp.217-18.
- (7) Ibn Qutayba thinks the phrase would be 'it would be this Qur'ān'. Ibid., p.214. So says Zamakhsharī, in his Kashshaf, as well.



Obviously the last clause, 'Say: 'are they equal', supplies the seal to the loose-ended structure, for it suggests that those who know are like the one described; what is meant is a contrast between them and others. Hence Pickthall's brackets: "Is he who payeth adoration in the watches of the night, prostrate and standing, bewareing of the Hereafter and hoping for the mercy of his Lord, (to be accounted equal with a disbeliever)? Say ..."

Some oaths are also left without a complement (jawāb).

50:1-2 ق وَالْقُرْآنِ الْمَجِيدِ بَلْ عَجِبُوا "Qāf. By the glorious Qur'ān. Nay but they marvel ..." and also 79:1-6; the complement can only be assumed. In fact the oath seems to be meant for its own sake. It creates a vivid image, one that is usually related to the general theme or the general atmosphere of the sūra. The things sworn by derive particular importance from the context and that in itself seems sufficient. This may also be gathered from 38:1-2; in both examples the oath is by the Qur'ān and probably to emphasize the truth of the Qur'ān.<sup>(8)</sup>

One of the scholars who paid attention to the stylistic effect of elision is Jurjānī. He expressed great appreciation for the device of leaving out the object when the intention is simply to denote the action. For example, he quoted 39:9 قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ "Say are those who know equal with those who know not?" and 53:43 وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ أَضْحَكَ وَأَبْكَى "And that He it is Who maketh laugh and maketh weep." In both examples the objects to the verbs ya'lamūna, adhaka, abka, amāta and ahya are left out. It seems too obvious to need to say that there is no place for the

(8) Al-Kashshāf, vol.4, p.70.

object in these examples, but Jurjānī considered this a kind of elision and over-praised it as such. However, it may be interesting to note how some of these structures turn out in translation. An āya which contains a number of verbs, none of which takes an object is 28:23 ولما ورد ما' مدين وجد عليه

أمة من الناس يسقون وجد من روثهم امرأتين تذودان قال ما خطبكما قلنا لا نسقي حتى يصدّر الرّعاء وأبونا شيخ كـير.

Arberry: 'And when he came to the waters

of Midian he found a company of the people

there drawing water, and he found apart from

them two women holding back their flocks.

He said, 'What is your business?' They said,

'we may not draw water until the shepherds

drive off, and our father is passing old.'

It is clear that 'drawing water' does not completely express the meaning of يسقون for the Arabic implies 'the drawing of water for a flock to drink' not simply 'drawing it'. Arberry had to insert an object, 'their flocks', as did Pickthall who used brackets twice.

Jurjānī also expressed his appreciation for a kind of structure in which the use of the object is delayed, so that when it is pronounced it covers more than one verb. Such structures are more common with shā'a and arāda. Some of Jurjānī's examples are 6:35 ولو شاء الله لجمعهم على الهدى and 16:9 ولو شاء لهداكم أجمعين He found these structures much more eloquent than their alternatives: ولو شاء الله ( أن ) ولو شاء ( أن يهديكم اجمعين ) لهداكم and يجمعهم على الهدى لجمعهم The Qur'ānic structure is obviously briefer and more direct; it

lays the emphasis on the right part of the sentence by eliminating the unnecessary part.

Although Jurjānī's treatment of the examples which he used to illustrate the device is not elaborate enough to make it clear why he appreciated this structure, his general statement on elision was echoed by Arab linguists and rhetoricians:

"It is a magic-like category, precise in method, subtle in approach ... In it you see what is implicit has been more eloquently expressed than if it had been made explicit. (By using it) you are more articulate when you do not voice your meaning and more informative when you are silent. ..."(9)

And later:

"For whenever a noun, or a verb is omitted where elision is appropriate, you find that elision and suppression is better than explicit statement."(10)

#### Compendious Expressions

Some of the expressions listed by scholars under the term

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(9) Dalā'il, p.170.

(10) Ibid., p.175.

qisar, are:

16:90 ان الله يأمر بالعدل والاحسان وايتا ذى القربى  
 "Lo! Allah enjoineth justice and kindness,  
 and giving to kinsfold."

7:199 خذ العفو وأمر بالعرف وأعرض عن الجاهلین  
 "Take the abundance, and bid to what is  
 honourable, and turn away from the  
 ignorant."

20:78 ففشيهم من الیم ما غشيهم  
 "... and there covered them that which  
 did cover them of the sea."

Ibn al-Athīr entitled this section 'that whose meaning exceeds its words'.<sup>(11)</sup> An examination of the āyas will show that each of the first two is a kind of universal where very pregnant words are used. The concepts of 'adl and ihsān in the first āya are wide concepts covering a wide range of moral values. The rest of the āya contains the words: fahshā', baghy and munkar. No wonder then that this āya has come to be one of the standard āyas, commonly quoted by Muslims for various reasons and in different contexts.

The same analysis applies to the second āya. 'afw and 'urf are very comprehensive words and so is the concept of jāhilīn.

The third āya, however, is slightly different. Its secret lies in a single word, mā, which is the type of ambiguity that stimulates the imagination. As a result of this ambiguity, the

(11) Al-Jāmi' al-Kabīr, p.143.

purpose which lengthy descriptions would have served is quite briefly achieved, probably with more effect than any description would attain.

Perhaps Ibn al-Athīr meant this aspect of ambiguity by his statement:

'Note that the basic principle in the qisar type (of ījāz) is that you mention something which bears many probabilities.' (12)

Interestingly, a comparison between Impletion (ishbā') and this type of ījāz reveals that the former achieves the effect of emphasis by dwelling on one aspect of the sense of the words, whereas the latter achieves an effect of comprehensiveness by employing words which reach out to cover a wide semantic area.

#### Word Choice

One of the features of style in the Qur'ān, which many scholars have noted, particularly Zamakhsharī, but which none of them have related to the aspect of brevity, is the use of structures which, by means of remote reference, serve a double purpose, thus cutting short the size of an utterance. In

25:7-8 ... وقالوا ما لهذا الرسول يأكل الطعام ..  
أو يلقي إليه كنز أو تكون له جنة يأكل منها وقال  
الظالمون ان تتبعون الا رجلا مسحورا .

"And they say: What aileth this messenger

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(12) Al-Jāmi' al-Kabīr, p.145.



that he eateth food ... or a treasure thrown down unto him, or why hath he not a paradise from whence to eat? And the evil-doers say: Ye are but following a man bewitched."

Zamakhsharī makes the profound observation that the phrase وقال الظالمون, actually refers to and describes the people who said what the āyas relate. In the āya, therefore, is a statement describing them as zālimun and yet the statement takes not the form of an assertion but a casual reference incorporated within the general tenor. Such structures are quite common in the Qur'ān. In 38:4 وعجبوا أن جاءهم منذر منهم وقال الكافرون "And they marvel that a warner from among themselves hath come unto them, and the disbelievers say: This is a wizard, a charlatan.", Zamakhsharī again notes that al-Kāfirūn is a description of the very people who wondered.<sup>(13)</sup> An alternative way of putting this would probably be: وعجبوا أن جاءهم منذر منهم وقالوا ساحر كذاب وإن الذين قالوا هذا لكافرون. Obviously this is a straightforward structure which removes all the subtlety of the Qur'ānic sentence and with the subtlety all the beauty of expression. Apart from the wordiness of this alternative, it is tedious in so far as it makes a special point of adding the label of kufṛ to those whose own words already made it too obvious.

The same may be said about 34:33: وأسروا الندامة لما رأوا العذاب وجعلنا الأغلال في أعناق الذين كفروا  
"... And they are filled with remorse when

(13) Al-Kashshāf, on 38:4. Vol.4, p.72.

they behold the doom, and We place carcans  
on the necks of those who disbelieve."

and about 2:98

من كان عدوا لله ورسوله وجبريل وميكال فان الله عدو للكافرين

"Who is an enemy to Allāh, and His angels  
and His messengers, and Gabriel and Michael!  
Then, lo! Allāh (Himself) is an enemy to  
the disbelievers."

In all the previous examples the aspect of brevity is unmistakable, for what could have been made a separate statement is enveloped within the label; it is then assumed to be understood by implication that the label applies to the same people who are mentioned at the beginning of the āya.

Zamakhsharī says about 34:33 that the expression "on the necks of those who disbelieve" is an explicit reference to (the label) in order to allude to their blameworthiness and to indicate the reason which justifies their being chained. (14)

Arabic poetry, particularly pre-Islamic, abounds in remote references which require some knowledge of the social beliefs together with a good acquaintance with structural peculiarities in order to come to grips with the meaning. (15)

In its extreme cases it might seem absurd, as in: فلا تدفنوني ان دفني محرم عليكم ولكن

خامري أم عامر The last phrase, خامري أم عامر is usually

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(14) Al-Kashshāf, on 34:33. Vol.3, pp.548-5.

(15) See Ibn Tabāṭaba, 'Iyār ash-shi'r, for a section on social beliefs necessary for the understanding of Arabic poetry.

shouted at the hyena when it is hunted. The poet not only assumed that the phrase denotes the animal, but also assumed that by simply mentioning it in the context of burial the listener would understand that throwing to hyenas is meant to be an alternative to proper burial. Although such an extreme type may not be found in the Qur'ān, it emphasizes the background necessary for understanding the Qur'ānic structure. When the Qur'ān was revealed, the Arab mentality was so used to these remote references and structural peculiarities that they had become part of its aesthetic taste.

#### Prepositions and Pronouns

A subtle way of achieving conciseness is also by use of words so that a word implies more than one sense; not that they are ambiguous but a duality of sense is intended which saves the trouble of making a separate statement.

A word in this case has its usual meaning and in addition to that it acquires an implied meaning usually hinted at by means of a preposition or a pronoun.

For instance, in 2:187 أحل لكم ليلة الصيام الرفث إلى نسائكم  
"Permitted to you, upon the night of the fast, is to go in to your wives ...", the word rafath is not normally followed by the preposition ilā, but here the word is used in a metaphorical sense and the other suppressed meaning is hinted at by the use of a preposition which would normally go with a word that directly denotes that meaning. In this case, Ibn-Jinnī refers to the sense of ifdā' in rafath. The word ifdā' is a word which takes the preposition ilā, so together with the context

the preposition hints at the sense of ifdā'. In this connection, Ibn-Jinnī quotes the verse قتل الله زياداعني where the preposition 'an' sounds abnormal being used with qatal. Hence, he notes that the sense is that of sarafa, a word which often necessitates the preposition 'an'.<sup>(16)</sup> Here the element of conciseness lies in the inclusion of a would-be separate phrase in the same word. The longer but more usual structure قد صرف الله زياداعني بقتله ( بأن قلــــه ) is abbreviated in a way which causes the minor meaning to surface and causes the major meaning to become implicit but prevalent. In the āya, however, the reason for preferring implication obviously has to do with avoiding explicitness on a subject which requires indirect expression. As would be expected in such cases, the translation can only choose one sense of the word. It is significant that most translators preferred the sense which the preposition suggests to the surface meaning of the word:

Arberry: 'to go in to your wives'.

Pickthall: 'to go unto your wives'.

Palmer: 'commerce with your wives'.

Ali: 'the approach to your wives'.

Palmer is an exception.

Another example is 15:66 وقضينا اليه ذلك الامر "... and We decreed for him that commandment..." where the verb qadā takes the preposition ilā; normally that does not happen. Zamakhsharī notes that here the verb includes the sense of awhā (reveal)

(16) Al-Khasā'is, vol.2, p.435.

and since awhā takes the preposition ilā, the latter was attached to the verb. He observes that the implication is: 'we revealed to him this affair determined and predestined.' (16)

It might be said, in conclusion to this chapter, that the style used in the Qur'an is normally one in which structural features convey a tendency to compress as much sense as possible in an utterance. The structural leaps are largely manifestations of the characteristics of the Arabic way of communication.

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(17) Al-Kashshāf, on 15:66. Vol.2, p.583.



## CONCLUSIONS

In this present thesis, there has been an attempt to examine the structure of the āya in the Qur'ān in strictly literary terms. Although the Qur'ān is the holy book of Islam, the range of literary analysis is very wide with regard to it. Traditional approaches have tended to lay special emphasis on theological matters at the expense of literary considerations. However, with the development of modern methods of literary analysis and the adaptation of the traditional Arabic methods, it is possible to gain new insights into this unique text.

It would seem most appropriate to study and examine the structure of the Qur'ān and other related problems from a literary point of view and in relation to the general modes of expression. Any historical analysis would appear to be of a secondary nature. In view of the significance of style for any real appreciation of the literary quality of the Qur'ān, translations will inevitably be inadequate. However good they may be, they will always fall short of conveying the subtleties of meaning, the stylistic effect and, above all, the feeling of the original.

It has only been possible within the compass of the present work to examine the āya. An attempt has been made to gain a better understanding of the presentation of the Qur'ān through an analytical approach which has aimed at examining the relation between form and meaning, or structure and theme, within the āya.

The āya is not typical of any other unit in Arabic; it is not like the verse (bayt) in poetry, nor the sentence of Arabic

prose. Although it seems quite independent, the āya is obviously interwoven with other units.

Some of the structural features in the āya are due to the nature of the message of the Qur'ān. Emphasis, for example, is a predominant feature and it certainly influences the structures in a remarkable way. Other features, on the other hand, are due to the aesthetic nature of Arabic which aims at variation and conciseness.

Finally, the style of the Qur'ān, which is an early Arabic style, is remarkably liberal in every sense. It is liberal in the use of rhyme, in the use of figures of speech, connectives, and all other syntactic considerations. Syntactic peculiarities are basically due to this style, where meaning comes before form, effect before rhetorical consistency and the mood of expression is generally bold.

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